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W I N T E R
E V E N I N G S.

VOL. I.

Winter Evenings:

LIBRARY

WINTER

EVENINGS

WINTER

Winter Evenings:

OR,

LUCUBRATIONS

ON

LIFE AND LETTERS.

by Vicesimus Knox

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

L O N D O N:

PRINTED FOR CHARLES DILLY.

M.DCC.LXXXVIII.

11

Winter Evening:

P R E F A C E

LUCUBRATIONS

HOWEVER I may be disposed to feel
diffident, I am not to tremble at the
imagining that a book which has obtained
a second year's sale can be recommended

to the public and the press

and your attention to this work is

directed to the

The author

humbly entreats

the reader, and

trusts that the

is every supposition

it is true, ought in many instances to be

rate in the local reputation of the work

for which it is intended, and

proportionally and not

other hand, the

a number of

of learning



P R E F A C E.

HOWEVER I may be disposed to self-delusion, I am not so simple as to imagine that a book which has nothing to recommend itself can be recommended by a preface. I think it indeed at once a mean and vain attempt to deprecate a reader's displeasure by preliminary submission. The avowal of conscious defects, of involuntary publication, of youth and inexperience, and of inability to resist the importunate solicitations of discerning friends, is ever supposed to be insincere; and, if it is true, ought in many instances to operate in the total suppression of the work for which it means to apologize. Great pretensions and bold professions, on the other hand, justly raise the contempt of a judicious reader. The liberal spirit of learning should scorn the language

of self-commendation, and leave the soft and flowing diction of puffery to the orator of the auction-room, and the stage of the empiric.

But, though every reader will justly claim a right to form his own opinion of a book, and will certainly reject the interference of a party so interested as its author, yet a preface is for the most part proper, since custom seems to have established the expediency of it, and the omission may possibly be considered as the want of a respectful piece of ceremony. Truly unwilling am I to be deficient in respect for those whose good opinion I must highly value, and for whose indulgence I shall certainly have great occasion.

But to proceed to business without farther preamble, lest I should be thought to write a preface to a preface.

My reader, on taking up his ivory knife to cut open the leaves, may perhaps ask—"What have we here? Three
new

new volumes?—And what stupendous discoveries has the author made?—Has he descried a new planet, or fresh volcanoes in the moon?—Has he taught the use of air balloons, and the method of guiding them through the regions of boundless space?—Has he, by beating his brain during the long winter evenings, hit upon the quadrature of the circle, the perpetual motion, the longitude at sea, the north-west passage, the southern continent, the philosophers stone, or the powder for destroying insects?—Has he exploded the old-fashioned system of morals, and given Christianity the last fatal blow?—Has he proved the lawfulness of polygamy and suicide, and the beneficial effects of private vice on public happiness?—Is the book embellished with capital prints engraved by the very best artists from originals by the painters of the Shakespeare Gallery?—Or is there any delicious abuse of the king?—What! nothing of this?—Nothing personal?—Nothing but general remarks on manners

and letters? — Then bring the newspaper."

Indeed, reader, I would venture to say, if I were present, I cannot pretend to recommendations so valuable as some of these, or so contemptible as others. I will farther confess, that I have no private anecdotes, no public politics, no intrigues, no theatrical history, no lives and adventures of actresses and their poor inamoratos; and that I come to you with nothing but a few plain remarks on men and books, made as I travelled along the road of life, with a pocket-book and pencil in my hand, to divert myself on the journey. Such as they are, I submit them to your perusal, hoping that, as a fellow traveller, you will partake in my amusements with that good humour which will certainly render your journey pleasanter to yourself.

"Amusement, you say, is very desirable; but, as to the amusement of books, the world is already crowded

with them." True, gentle reader; but as my volumes are not very large, there may perhaps be found a little crevice into which, provided you are really gentle and good-natured, you may find means to squeeze them. If indeed I, an individual in the numerous host of writers, should spare you this trouble, others will certainly supply my place, and you will gain little by partial severity. As there is no law that compels a man to read, you may enjoy your repose unmolested whenever you please, only by considering every book which you have no desire to inspect, as so much harmless waste paper.

Indeed if you are, *bonâ fide*, determined to read none but such authors as Newton, Locke, and Malbranche, far be it from me to interrupt your profound studies, or to pester you with my crudities; but if you are "*unus multorum*," and find yourself inclined to send now and then for a book in boards fresh from the book-sellers, permit me to be a candidate among the rest for the honour of a leisure hour while

while your hair-dresser waits upon you, while you sip your hyson, or while you recline in the corner of your chariot.

Methinks I see you relax your brow, resume your folding knife, and resolve to look into a volume for a lounge. But why, you ask, this hackneyed miscellaneous form? I answer plainly, because it was the most agreeable to myself; but lest you should think that reason alone too selfish, I add, because I conjectured that it might be the most agreeable to you in the midst of your various studies and more important avocations. I address not my book to systematical and metaphysical doctors, to deep, erudite, and subtile sages, but to those who, without pretending to be among the seven wise men, have no objection to kill a little time, by perusing at their leisure the pages of a modern volume.

Upon the whole, I comfort myself with the idea, that if I should unfortunately fail to entertain you, I can do you no great

great injury, which is more than can be predicated of all books without exception. It is far better, in my opinion, to present you with a chip in porridge than a cup of poison.

You observe by this time, and I most readily acknowledge, that I had not much to say for myself worth attending to in this my preface. Indeed I entered upon it principally, as I hinted before, to shew that I was unwilling to break in upon you abruptly, and without any ceremony at all. But if the preface answers no other end, it is yet sufficiently useful in affording me an opportunity of declaring, that, though I certainly should not offer you my book if I thought it quite unworthy of your notice, yet that I am convinced its own merits will not secure it a good reception without an ample share of your candour. And though I have already acknowledged that I have no great opinion of the propriety or success of such requests; yet, as it can do no harm, I will take the liberty of asking the following favour:
Whatever

Whatever you approve in my book, pray place to my account; but all errors and defects be so kind as attribute to the press, to haste, to inadvertence, or, pardon my freedom, to your own misapprehension; and in so doing you will oblige me greatly.

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Winter

WINTER EVENINGS:
OR,
LUCUBRATIONS
ON
LIFE and LETTERS.

BOOK THE FIRST.

CHAP. I.

Literature more attended to in Winter than in Summer.—Remarks introductory and apologetical.

IN the summer season, the warm temperature of the air, the beauty of a vivid foliage, and the sweet smiles of universal nature, allure men from their studious retirement, and tempt them to roam in the sunshine from flower to flower like the butterfly; but when the days are gradually contracted, and the cold weather causes the swallow to wing her way to more genial climes, the gaudy insect to retire to its warm and safe concealment, and the leaf to assume the yellow and russet tinge of autumnal decay, and at length to drop from its parent branch, the

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man of sentiment sympathises with the scene around him, shrinks under his roof, and into himself; and seeks that solace which the sunny hill and the verdant mead no longer afford him, at the fire side, in the converse of those whom he loves or esteems; or in an elegant and philosophical solitude, reading, writing, and contemplating the productions of art during the repose of nature.

In a climate uncertain and inclement like our own, fine weather affords a great pleasure, and he who is not urged to exertion by his wants or passions, seems to acquiesce in it, and to require few other gratifications, besides the enjoyment of it unmolested. The mind is gently lulled by it to a luxurious complacency, and finds contentment in the Epicurean pleasure of a perfect inactivity. To bask in the sunshine, or to breathe the balsamic gale of a zephyr in the shade, is a satisfaction of the sensual kind, no less delightful than pure.

But when the mind is so well pleased without exertion, it seldom engages in study, or serious reflection, unless it is stimulated by ambition or necessity; and this obviously suggests a reason why books are much less required as the amusement of Summer than of Winter.

There

There seems indeed to be something in the garish splendor of a bright sunshine, rather unfavourable to contemplation. One would almost conclude, that the powers of the mind, like vapours, are dissipated in the warm months, and concentrated in the cold. Heat undoubtedly relaxes the body, and causes an inertness which disposes the mind to partake of any diversion which offers itself in the open air, rather than retire to the laborious occupations of recluse study. Cold has a contrary effect; and therefore the Winter favours the operations of the mind, and induces it to exert itself with vigour.

But the length of the evenings in winter, which renders it necessary to find some sedentary and domestic diversion, may also contribute to render reading a more favourite amusement in Winter than in Summer. Books enable the imagination to create a Summer in the midst of frost and snow, and, with the assistance of culinary fire, whose comfortable warmth supplies, round the parlour hearth, the absence of the Sun, I believe the Winter is considered by few as less pleasureable upon the whole than the season of soft breezes and solar effulgence.

The student shuts the door, while the chill wind whistles round his room, and the rain beats upon the tiles and pavement, stirs his fire, snuffs his

candle, throws himself into his elbow chair, and defies the elements. If he chuses to transport himself to warm climates, to regions delightful as the vale of Tempè, or even to riot in all the enchanting scenes of Elysium, he has only to take a volume from his book-case, and, with every comfort of ease and safety at home, he can richly feast his capacious imagination.

I do not mean to depreciate the delights of Summer ; but as in this climate we have a long Winter, I think it our interest to find out every consolation which the amusements peculiarly fuitable to it can innocently supply, and among these I cannot but consider Reading as one of the principal. The mind, the very soul, is deeply interested in this ; and whatever touches with delight the interior principle, the divine particle within us, produces a happiness, or state of enjoyment, equally substantial and refined.

In the metropolis of a rich and luxurious empire, inexhaustible sources of amusement are discovered by the ingenious activity of those who seek their maintenance by exhibiting publick spectacles, by supplying music, and by convening assemblies of the young, the gay, the fortunate. Perhaps the evening in London is seldom employed by people of fashion, and their innumerable imitators, in the silent occupation of reading,

reading, or in the tranquil society of the domestic circle; but in the country, those who do not devote their attention to cards, find themselves compelled to seek occasional entertainment from the shelves of their book-room; and even in the great city, many from choice, from habit, from confinement, know no better way of passing away an hour in a Winter Evening, than by turning over the pages addressed to their reason or their fancy.

Admovit jam Bruma foco te?

PERS.

— Posces librum cum lumine — et

Intendes animum studiis et rebus honestis. HOR.

For myself, and let the reader pardon my egotism on my first introduction, I must acknowledge, that, though I have no objection to cards in moderation, I have at the same time no taste for them. They appear to me too dull and unideal to afford a thinking man, who values his leisure, an adequate return of amusement for the Time they engross. In a rural retirement, what could I do in the Winter Evenings, when no society interrupted, but read or write? I have done both in a vicissitude pleasant to myself, and as my inclination or my ideas of propriety suggested. In these employments I have found my time pass away, not only innocently, but pleasantly; and most of these chapters are literally what their title insinuates, the produce of the

Winter Evenings. Let me be pardoned, if I have presumed to hope that some, in the various tribes of mankind, actuated by an infinite variety of pursuits, might spend an hour in reading, as I have in writing them, with at least so much diversion, as excludes passion and vice, and prevents the pain of total inaction. I shall not presume to censure those who prefer whist, or the theatre; but some will prefer a book, and, in pursuit of variety, may sometimes take up mine.

As I am convinced that happiness chiefly consists in occupation, I will confess that the amusement of my Winter Evenings has been my principal design; but, if in the variety of my speculations, I have been led to treat of topics which at the same time afford improvement, *lucro apponam*, I shall consider it as so much clear gain, and as adding a real value to my production. Indeed, I am clearly of opinion, that whoever furnishes an intellectual entertainment, capable of filling up those hours, which are usually devoted to relaxation, innocently and pleasantly, though he should not approach with the solemn air of a professed instructor, may yet contribute much to improvement and advantage. He may occupy vacant minds, which might deviate into vanity and vice from the want of avocations. He may engage those hours which might become burthen-

burthenfome, or be injuriously and difagreeably lavifhed in bufy impertinence.

But are there not books enough already for this and for almoft every other purpofe? Is not the world filled with books, even to fatiety? Perhaps fo; but the world is wide, and readers more numerous at prefent than in any preceding age. A liberal education is more general, and is likely to be ftill more extenfively diffufed.

The Englifh language is the language of a vaft continent of people, greatly increafing in numbers, and connecting themfelves in commercial, and all other engagements, with all nations. Englifh literature is of courfe the literature of America. The learning of England has long been flowing from the Thames to the Ganges. The late amicable connection with our neighbours, which reflects fo much honour on the liberality and wifdom of the prefent times, will contribute greatly to extend the language and the learning of Great Britain throughout Europe. So that if writers can produce any thing worthy of attention, there is little reafon to fear a paucity of readers.

But granting that books are already too numerous, yet let it be confidered, that a new book will often be read when an old one,

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of equal or greater merit, will be neglected. Many old books of great excellence are become scarce, and the great number of modern readers could not so easily be supplied with them, even if they knew of them and valued them, as with the multiplied copies of a new publication. Many books, though they once had a great character, and are still found in libraries and catalogues, are fallen into deserved oblivion, and consequently a vacancy is made by their demise for an ambitious candidate to supply their place.

If novelty of publication were prohibited, there is every reason to believe that literature would decline. The love of fame and the love of novelty are the great incentives of both writers and readers. The profound scholar might indeed rejoice as he pores over the Bodleian folios, that he was not pestered with new works too lively to attract his notice; but the liberal merchant, the inquisitive manufacturer, the country gentleman, the various persons who fill the most useful departments in life, without pretending to literature, would find a copious source of pleasure and improvement rescinded. Is the pleasure and improvement of classes, both numerous and respectable, to be neglected? The erudition which is confined to a few libraries, or locked in the bosom of a few professors, is of
4 small

small value to the publick at large, and consequently, when viewed with a liberal eye to the welfare of society, of little estimation. It may be compared to a stagnant pool, large, perhaps, and deep, but of little utility; while the knowledge which displays itself in popular works may be said to resemble a river, fertilizing, refreshing, and embellishing whole provinces through which its meanders roll their tide.

Whatever the affected pretenders to depth and solidity of science may urge, new publications will always continue to excite curiosity in a country so intelligent, so inquisitive, so free as Great Britain. In every new attempt, Expectation is on tiptoe to see, whether there is not some new improvement; and if she finds not all she promised herself, she usually finds something, or at least has been pleasantly occupied in the enquiry.

But if it should be asked and answered in the words of the Roman poet;

Quis leget hæc?—Nemo, Hercule, nemo

Vel duo, vel nemo.

PERS.

If this answer should unfortunately be true, I may console myself with the reflection, that my Lucubrations will not be entirely useless; because manufacturers concerned in the mecha-

nical part of a work must be employed, and the trunkmakers supplied. Why may not one contribute to waste one's share of paper that will otherwise be wasted?

Stulta est clementia—perituræ parcere chartæ. Juv.
One advantage will certainly attend the waste, since the consumption of paper contributes to the revenue.

It is with such affected jocularly that we writers endeavour to put a good face on a disappointment, which none, who ever thought it worth while to write, have ever considered with perfect indifference. The good opinion of readers cannot but be grateful to writers, whatever, in the pride of their hearts, they may insinuate to the contrary. Some have pretended to find a consolatory recompence for neglect in a false contempt, and by saying with the miser in Horace,

*Populus me sibilat; at mihi plaudo
Ipse domi.*

The philosophy, if there really be any such, which teaches an utter contempt for the opinion of all mankind, is favourable to no beneficial quality, and conduces chiefly to the increase of that pride from which it derives its origin.

Though selfish motives of every kind should be removed, which is more than in the present
state

state can often be true ; yet, whoever wishes to do good, and to afford a rational amusement, must wish to be acceptable, for, without pleasing, he will find it difficult to profit.

I will make no pretensions to that superiority which considers censure and applause with equal insensibility. I confess I shall derive a sincere satisfaction from being well received by my reader. The present business of self introduction may be a little awkward ; but, before we part, I hope to obtain his confidence, and that he will not in any respect be the worse for honouring me with his attention.

Introductory papers have usually been more embarrassing to writers than those which succeed them. Ceremonies of introduction are seldom pleasant in real life ; but to write on oneself, and one's own views and undertakings, however pleasing to self love, is apt to cause in the reader a considerable degree of oscitancy. Lest I should fairly lull him to sleep on the very first Winter Evening, which would be an inauspicious commencement, I think it would be prudent to wish him good night, and say but little more about it.

I will trespass on his patience but one minute : I find it good policy, like some of my predecessors,

cessors, to defend my title from the attacks of witticism by anticipation. I desire therefore to give notice, like Mr. Fitz-Adam in the beginning of the World, that if any one shall be disposed to say, These Winter Evenings are cold, or dark, or dull, or tedious, that more fire or more light is wanted; the joke will be considered as worn out, that it will be not allowed to pass in currency, but will be cried down like coin too light, and deficient in sterling value.

With respect to my title, which is thus exposed to the shafts of witticism, some title was necessary, and that of Winter Evenings appeared sufficiently distinctive. Attic Evenings, which Gellius has anticipated, would have been too ostentatious. It would have led the reader to expect a greater quantity of attic salt than I shall be able to supply, and might have tempted him to say,

Quid tanto dignum feret hic promissor hiatus? HOR.

I believe it will be best to say nothing on the motives which induce me to bring my Lucubrations before the public eye. I might indeed talk much of a regard for the public good, and declare, like the celebrated Mr. Ashley, late of Ludgate Hill, that it was all *pro bono publico*. But I am of opinion, that *pro bono publico* on the front of the house, or in the beginning of a book,

book, is rather a suspicious circumstance. Indeed, it has been observed, that the motive of any conduct, rendered most ostensible, often operates with least force, and that the motive, which is studiously disavowed or concealed, is, in the ordinary course of human actions, the real spring and the prime mover. The heart is certainly deceitful, and it is the safest method, if we would neither delude ourselves nor others, not arrogantly to assume any exalted superiority, but to let our good motives be evinced by our good conduct. Whatever pretences I might make on the present occasion, perhaps, on a careful analysis, it might appear, that a great portion of the moving principle consisted of mere vanity and a downright *scribendi cacoethes*. If so, though the infirmity of human nature may be lamented, yet the number of authors excited by similar motives will always keep each other in countenance. And, indeed, why should people be outrageously angry with a vain and a poor writer? A man of a restless activity may, in pursuit of distinction, spend his time much more injuriously to society than in writing a foolish book. It is a consolatory reflection, that a book can neither trouble nor hurt us without our own co-operation.

Un livre vous déplaît?—Qui vous force à lire?

BOILEAU.

C H A P. II.

Of the titles of miscellaneous writings,—and of titles in general.

GELLIUS, with a delicacy which may be deemed a little too scrupulous, is fearful lest his title should be considered as arrogant or affected, and therefore anxiously takes care to inform his reader, that his lucubrations were called *Noctes Atticae*, solely because they were written in Attica during a winter's residence in that country. He is unwilling to let it for a moment be supposed, that he intended to assume the merit of Attic elegance or wit, or to allure readers by the artifice of an inviting title.

After making his own apology, he proceeds to censure the affectation of titles assumed by the writers of Miscellanies; and though his strictures on them are generally just, yet perhaps he too severely condemns some of them, which are not deficient either in a decent humility, or in the propriety of their application.

I think it may afford amusement to the English reader to view some of the inventions of ancient authorship in that important part of a work, the fabrication of a *Title Page*. Many of them have

have been borrowed and greatly embellished by the moderns, in the hope of attracting notice; as the innkeeper invites the traveller by a gilded Bacchus, a Tun and a Bunch of Grapes, and the tempting inscription, "Good Entertainment for Man and Horse."

The title of *the Muses* was often given to poetical miscellanies, by which the poet rather arrogantly insinuated, that his work was peculiarly favoured by the inspiring Nine. But it was by no means confined to poetry. I believe, indeed, it more frequently occurred in history, where Herodotus had set the example of it, by giving each of his books the name of a Muse. Some critics acquit Herodotus of the apparent arrogance, and suppose that these elegant appellations were bestowed on his books by his sanguine admirers.

The Graces were introduced as the titular recommendations of three orations of Æschines, to which the beauty of their language is said to have given them a just claim; but this title must not reflect on the author's vanity, as it is reasonable to believe that it was the voluntary reward of the reader's approbation.

SYLVÆ is one of the most elegant, as well as commonest titles to the miscellanies of the antients.

antients. The origin of it is the Greek, HYLE; and the authors, who first assumed it, modestly intimated by it, that they had collected a store of *timber*, which themselves, or others, might hereafter use in erecting a regular structure. The SYLVÆ of Statius are supposed to be more valuable than his finished compositions. In imitation of him many modern writers of Latin poetry have entitled the miscellaneous parts of their books, SYLVÆ; and our own Ben Johnson, alluding to the antient title of *Sylvæ*, denominates some of his smaller works *Underwoods*. He entitles his *observations on men and things* TIMBER, which must appear unaccountably singular to the unlearned reader, and is in truth not a little pedantic. He adds, in Latin, the following marginal explanation. It is called, says he, *Timber*, SYLVA, HYLE, *from the multiplicity and variety of matter which it contains; for, as we commonly call an indefinite number of trees growing together indiscriminately, A WOOD, so the antients intitled those of their books, in which little miscellaneous pieces were irregularly arranged, SYLVAS, or Timber-trees.*

QUINTILIAN describes the works distinguished by the name *Sylvæ*, as struck out with the impulse of a sudden calenture, *subito excussa calore*, and assigns causes for the appellation similar to those which have been already mentioned.

If the name should be differently interpreted, and understood to suggest the pleasantness and variety of roaming in a *wood*, abounding with every diversity of foliage, and displaying many a sweet flowret in all the beautiful wildness of Nature; *the Wood, the Grove, or the Forest*, would not be improper titles for a Miscellany, provided it were of merit enough to answer the expectation of beauty and variety, which the titles might justly raise.

PEPLON, or PEPLOS, *the Mantle*, was prefixed to works consisting of detached pieces on various subjects. *The Peplon*, according to the description of Potter, was a white garment without sleeves, embroidered with gold, and representing the exploits of Minerva, particularly in the battles of the Giants against Jupiter; but though this was originally the only subject, it was not retained so exclusively as not to admit the embroidery of other figures which had no relation to it. In process of time the heroes of Athens, after an important victory, were delineated upon it with sumptuous elegance, to be exhibited at the grand festival of Minerva, as an honorary reward of past merit, and an incitement to future. Hence arose the idea of distinguishing with the name *Peplon* such books or poems as described the achievements of great warriors. Aristotle wrote a poem of this kind, and called

it

it *The Peplon*. It comprized the lives and death of the most illustrious of his countrymen. Every history concluded with an epitaph of two lines. The loss of the *Stagirite's Peplon* is an irreparable injury to the Grecian history, and to polite letters. It may not be improper to add, that when the Greeks expressed their highest approbation of a hero, it was a proverbial saying among them, *He is worthy of the PEPLON*.

But the word was not applied only to the *Peplon* of Minerva. It signified the external vestment of any dignified lady; and, from the description of it, may be imagined to resemble the modern or oriental shawl. The ladies of Greece displayed their singular ingenuity in decorating it with the richest and most picturesque delineations which their manual ingenuity could produce; and the art of the weaver, the dyer, and the engraver, had not then superseded the fine operations of the needle.

The poet therefore, who assumed this title, promised his readers every variety of the most vivid colouring and picturesque imagery. He called them to view a richly figured tissue, *a mantle embroidered with gold and purple*. I should think the title more particularly appropriated to the works of the Sapphos than of the Aristotles. We have many in our own country who could with equal

equal ease and elegance produce a *Peplon* in its literal or its figurative sense.

A miscellaneous author, who wished to convey the idea of great exuberance and inexhaustible variety, denominated his work KERAS AMALTHEIAS, or the *Horn of Amalthea*, which will be more generally understood if I render it the *Cornucopia*. The pretty fable of Jupiter's rewarding Amalthea, the nurse who fed him with goat's milk in his infancy, by giving her a horn of the goat, from which she should be able to take whatever she wanted, gave rise to this title, and to the idea of *Cornucopia*, which is now familiar to the illiterate. As a title it was too ostentatious, and favoured something of the vain pretensions of empiricism.

A *Hive* and a *Honeycomb* conveyed at once the idea of industry and taste in the collector, and of sweetness in the collection. It is obvious to conclude therefore, that KERION would become the title of miscellaneous books; and if the books were merely compilations, I can see in it no impropriety. That a man should compare his own works to honey, and invite the reader to taste the *luscious store*, is a degree of self conceit which may perhaps justify the censure and the contempt of Gellius.

LIMON,

LIMON, or *the Meadow*, was a pleasing title to works variegated with all the colours of a fertile imagination. It gives the reader cause to expect flowers richly interspersed; cowslips, violets, bluebells; verdure, softness, fragrance, plenty. I imagine it to have been chiefly applied to poetry. I remember to have seen a small collection of juvenile poems by that polite scholar Sir William Jones, to which he has given the title of *Limon*, in imitation of those antients whom he admires with warmth, and imitates with taste.

To mark their miscellaneous compositions, every title which could express a collection of flowers has been adopted both by the antients and moderns: hence *Anthera*, *Florilegium*, *Anthologia*, *Polyanthæa*; hence also the *Nossegay*, the *Garland*, the *Wreath*, the *Chaplet*, and the *Festoon*.

LYCHNUS, or the *Torch*, sufficiently pointed out a book which was to diffuse light; but it falls under the imputation of arrogance, and, like EUREMATA, *Discoveries*, (which Ben Johnson has adopted), raised expectation to a dangerous eminence.

STROMATEUS, or the *Carpet*, resembles the *Peplon*. PINAX or *Pinakidion*, the *Picture*, conveyed an obvious yet pleasing idea. PANDECTE,
though

though chiefly applied to collections of law, extended also to miscellaneous books of polite literature, and seems intended to signify something like the monthly Magazines, as the word might be rendered in the modern style, *the Universal Repository, or Receptacle*.

ENCHIRIDION, *the Manual*, or rather *the Little Dagger*, was a common title to works of small magnitude comprehending things of great moment. It was the small sword, which the soldiers wore constantly at their sides for personal defence against any sudden assault. The word, applied to a book, signified a little treatise always at hand, comprehending arguments for occasional defence and constant security. The *Enchiridion* of Epictetus was a compendium of his philosophy, in a *pocket volume*, as a *pocket companion*, no less convenient to repel the gain-fayers, than a pocket pistol, a thief or assassin, or than a pocket cordial to exhilarate the spirits upon any occasional depression.

But enough of antient titles. If Aulus Gellius had lived in modern times, I believe he would have considered the titles which he has stigmatized with the appellation of *Festivitates Inscriptionum*, modest and unassuming in comparison with some which it would be easy, though rather invidious, to enumerate in the English language. Popular
theology,

theology, in the days of the Puritans, exhibited some titular curiosities; such as, *Crumbs of Comfort*, a *Shove*, &c. and others equally laughable, and most incongruous to the seriousness of rational divinity. I believe the authors and readers were truly sincere; but, if they had intended to ridicule what they certainly revered, they could not have devised a more successful expedient than the drollery of a quaint and ludicrous title page.

That works addressed to the illiterate should be recommended by a pompous title page, is not wonderful. Their sagacious editors know that vulgar minds are captivated by bold pretensions and warm professions in literature as in medicine. Since the artifice is an innocent one, and succeeds in recommending useful books among those by whom instruction is greatly wanted; while, at the same time, it is too apparent to deceive the well educated and sensible, it deserves not the severity of satire, though it must of necessity excite derision. For splendor and copiousness of panegyric epithet, no age can produce a parallel to many of the curious titles and commendations printed on the blue covers of works delivered to the expecting world in weekly numbers. Language toils in vain for expressions adequate to the excellence of the composition, the beauty of the type and paper, and the superb elegance of the copper-plates,
Grand,

Grand, imperial, magnificent, unparalleled, are the beggarly epithets which the editors are compelled to use from the deficiency of language. All this is laughable ; but it is found, I suppose, to introduce a Bible, or a System of Geography, or a History of England, into the family of some poor mechanic, who spends sixpence on Saturday for an improving book, which might otherwise be lavished in riot and intemperance.

In the higher ranks of literature, I know not that any peculiar affectation in titles is observed to prevail. There is, indeed, too much good sense in the age to tolerate either arrogance or affectation in a title page.

The only rule for the *regulation of a title* is, what common sense suggests, that it should be concise, as descriptive of the contents of the book as conciseness will allow, easy to be pronounced, and easy to be remembered. A title page may be compared to the portal of an edifice. Who would exhibit the magnificence of Grecian architecture, the fluted column, and the sculptured capital, at the entrance of a cottage? Pliny, who ridicules the *inviting titles*, some of which are already described, concludes with this lively exclamation : *At cum intraveris, Dii, Deaque, quàm nihil in medio invenies !* But when you shall have accepted the invitation, and
have

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have entered in, ye Gods and Goddesſes, what a mere nothing you will find in the middle!

A title may inveigle the unwary; but thinking men and poſterity will form their judgments ſolely from the contents; and, if they are valuable, the old adage may be applied to them; “Good wine needs no buſh.”

If books of repute have not at preſent pompous titles derived from Greek and Latin, yet public ſights and public places abound in them.

Pliny and Gellius would perhaps be a little ſevere on *Holophuſicon*, *Eiduraneon*, *Microcoſm*, *Lactarium*, *Adelphi*, *Rbedarium*. It would not, in this learned age, be ſurpriſing to ſee a barber ſtyle himſelf on the architrave of his peruke warehouse, *Phlebotomiſt*, *Odontologiſt*, *Chiropodiſt*, *Pogonologiſt*, and P. C. A. or *Profeſſor of the Coſmetic Art*. It is a little affectation of no conſequence; and therefore one need not exclaim with the Satiriſt,

— Non poſſum ferre, Quirites,
Græcam urbem.—

Indeed, the love of pretty and well ſounding names extends to private life, and diſplays itſelf at the font of baptiſm. The names of *Dorothy*, *Deborah*, *Abigail*, *Bridget*, *Judith*, *Barbara*,
Prudence,

Prudence, Charity, Grace, Obedience, have given way to *Carolina, Wilhelmina, Charlotta, Emily, Amelia*, and *Henrietta*. Even the good old English *Ann, Mary*, and *Elizabeth*, are elegantly converted into *Anna, Maria*, and *Eliza*. This great improvement of national taste, which is at present visible in the lowest as well as highest class, is doubtless diffused over the kingdom by sentimental novels, where a *Deborah* or a *Bridget*, even if she were of a degree of beauty, understanding, and goodness, approaching to angelic, would be—A SHOCKING CREATURE! Such is the power of Names! And I will agree, that it is very desirable to have a good name, and I hope to see the *Emilies* and *Henriettas* of the present day, deserve a good name by exceeding in virtue and good housewifery, as well as in elegance of taste, the *Deborahs* and the *Dorothies*, the *Prudences* and the *Charities*, the *Loves* and the *Graces* of our great-grandmothers.

C H A P. III.

Opinantium unitas, opinionum varietas. Those who differ in opinion may be united in affection.

—Of controversy. — The spirit with which it ought to be conducted.

THE variety of opinions which prevails among mankind, like the wind blowing at different times from different quarters, and with different degrees of violence and temperature, is certainly productive of a salutary agitation. The languor occasioned by a constant Sicilian *sirocco*, would not be more insufferable than the insipidity of universal consent. If all men thought alike on all subjects, their pursuits would flag like fire for want of opposition; and that enlivening diversity which appears in human life, and is found to promote the ends of social union by mutually supplying defect, and by stimulating to chearful exertion, would sink into the dead repose of unvaried uniformity. Tumult would be the consequence of an exact and universal resemblance of sentiments, instead of that fine order which results from the apparent chaos, the discordant concord of taste, studies, sects, parties, principles, antipathies, and

and predilections. All the hues of the prismatic spectrum are intermixed to produce that beautiful result of the whole, the snowy whiteness of the swan's plumage.

But much evil also arises from diversity of opinions; for here too appears that characteristic of every thing sublunary, the alloy of predominant good by the partial commixture of evil. It too frequently happens that the understandings of men cannot be divided by difference of opinion, without a corresponding division of their hearts and affections. Pride intervenes with usurping insolence where the appeal was made to reason, and where reason only should decide. Men consider their personal importance intimately concerned in maintaining the sentiments which they have once advanced. To acknowledge themselves mistaken, and convinced by the arguments of an opponent, they are inclined to think an humiliating confession of their own inferiority. The object of the controversy ceasing to be truth, becomes the triumph of victorious disputation.

But since the reciprocal discussion of interesting questions is conducive to the discovery of truth, as the winnowing of wheat separates it from chaff; and since a difference of opinion appears to be in general salutary, and, from the

nature of man, is likely also for ever to subsist, I think it worth while to endeavour the accomplishment of a purpose so valuable as that of preventing a disagreement in matters of opinion, from violating the connexions of friendship, diminishing philanthropy, and souring the sweets of social intercourse.

Politicks, in a free country like our own, have always been a principal cause of disunion. Every man feels himself so far interested in the conduct of a government in which he participates by his suffrage, as to be powerfully affected by it independently of his interest. He is not contented with barely approving or disapproving public measures according to the decisions of his judgment, but enters so warmly into the subject, as frequently to feel a conflict of violent emotions, seeking vent in violent language. If his decisive dictates happen to be opposed in company, angry and vindictive expressions arise in the warmth of collision. Pride is wounded on both sides by some random shaft; and they who sat down with all the cordiality of friendship, rise with a considerable degree of indifference at least, if not with the rancour of a settled animosity.

If Passion could listen to Reason, it would surely be acknowledged by the disputants themselves,

selves, a disgraceful folly to permit a difference of opinion to disunite those whose opinions can never have the least influence on the direction of public affairs, of which they dispute. It is indeed most ridiculous to behold two poor mortals destroying happiness, under the pretence of serving the public, or zeal for the government, when their insignificance as individuals renders them totally unable to controul, in the smallest degree, the settled course of national transactions. It is like two flies on the pole of a coach and six, fighting for the privilege of directing which way, and with what speed, the carriage shall advance.

But, to the honour of the present age, it must be allowed, that a disagreement on party and political subjects no longer causes those irreconcilable animosities among families, which disgraced the manners of the English, as they appeared in the last, and in the beginning of the present century. Such is the liberality of the age, that two families, who espouse the cause of opposite parties, and think differently of a new ministry or a public measure, can live in the mutual interchange of neighbourly offices without a particle of enmity. This gentleness and moderation among a people whom the fury of political rage has often enflamed to phrenzy, is

one of the most remarkable as well as beautiful features of the time, and reflects honour on the progress of national humanity and unaffected refinement.

Religion, properly understood, inspires every thing benevolent; yet the Christian himself blushes while he owns, that no subject of human concern has raised more violent disputes and more inveterate hatred, among its warmest and perhaps sincerest professors. In this respect also, the superiority of the present age over the past is strikingly conspicuous. A church of England man, a presbyterian, and a quaker, will now sit at the same table, and discourse, not only on the common topics of the day, but on religion, without jealousy, and with all the affectionate attention of cordial esteem. Remembering that they are united as men, they forget the petty distinctions of sectaries. This liberality ought not in candor to be attributed to a lukewarm indifference, but to the prevalence of that real charity, which, whatever the satirist may alledge, seems to have encreased with the improvements in real knowledge. Happily for mankind, in the fluctuation of modes, benevolence and liberality are now not only entertained from principle, but become the fashion.

Books of controverſy are at preſent leſs common, and leſs encouraged, than in the preceding age. Scarcely any thing of conſequence came out at one time, without a numerous train of letters to the author, examinations, queries, answers, replies, and rejoinders. The abuſe poured from men of letters, teachers of religion, profeſſors of theology, was ſuch as can only find a parallel in the ſchools of Billingsgate. The ſubject itſelf was perhaps inſipid, and, like a taſteleſs diſh, would not be re- liſhed by the majority of readers, unleſs it was highly ſeaſoned with vinegar and pepper as well as ſalt. They who enjoyed it muſt have had coarſe palates, and a digeſtion like the oſtrich, with whom lead or dirt, it may be imagined, was no leſs digeſtible than iron.

I will trefpaſs on my reader's patience while I give him a ſpecimen of the controverſial ſtyle of two moſt eminent divines writing on a moſt awful ſubject, THE HOLY TRINITY. The combatants were *Dr. William Sherlock*, dean of St. Paul's and maſter of the Temple, and *Dr. Robert South*, prebendary of Weſtminſter and canon of Chriſt-church; both celebrated authors, both zealous profeſſors of Chriſtianity.

Dr. South ſays, that Dr. Sherlock had made

use of such expressions as the following with reference to him. "*Ingenious blunderer, trifling author, wandering wit, wrangling wit, levian than, one whose risibility will prove him a man, though he is seldom in so good a humour as to laugh without grinning, which belongs to another species, videlicet, a dog. A notable man, and one that can make shift to read and transcribe.*" And then, of Dr. South's animadversions, Dr. Sherlock says, "*They are characterised by senseless mistakes, school terms instead of sense, gipsy cant, perfect gibberish, ignorance and raving, an hundred absurdities and fooleries, huffing, swaggering, and scolding, that it is a great scolding book, remarkable for want of sense, &c.*"

So far the reverend Dean against the reverend Prebendary in a trinitarian dispute. Now let us hear the Prebendary against the Dean. On the above expressions of Dr. Sherlock, Dr. South thus animadvert.

"*There are several more of the like Gravel Lane elegancies.*"

Dr. William Sherlock, it seems, was born of honest parents in Gravel Lane, Southwark; and the great prebendary often throws the
said

said Gravel Lane in his teeth in the course of the controversy, being, to be sure, a circumstance of great weight in discussing the doctrine of the Trinity.

Dr. South proceeds. "All these expressions have such peculiar strictures of the author's genius, that he might very well spare his name where he had made himself so well known by his mark; for all the foregoing oyster-wive, kennel rhetoric seems naturally to flow from him who had been so long rector of St. Botolph's, with the well spoken, *Billinggate*," (this famous school of rhetoric being in the parish of St. George, Botolph Lane, of which Dr. Sherlock was rector), "that, so much a teacher as he was, it may well be questioned, whether he has learned more from his parish, than his parish from him."

"But after all," proceeds the great South, "may I not ask him this short question?"

"Where is the wit and smartness of thought? Where are the peculiar graces and lucky hits of fancy, that should recommend the foregoing expressions to the learned and ingenious? No.—Nothing of all this is to be found in this man's words or way of speaking; but all savour of the porter, the carman, and the waterman; and a

“ pleasant scene it must needs be to the reader, to see
 “ the Master of the Temple thus laying about him
 “ in the language of the stairs. But what,” continues the dignitary, “ men draw from their education (he means in Gravel Lane), generally sticks by them for term of life; and it is not
 “ to be expected that a mouth so long accustomed to
 “ throw dirt should ever leave it off till it comes
 “ to be stopped with it.”

In one of his prefaces he interrogates, “ Was
 “ it the school, the university, or Gravel Lane,
 “ that taught him this language ? ”

In another place, He who was to teach us to
 RETURN GOOD FOR EVIL, AND WHEN
 REVILED NOT TO REVILE AGAIN, goes
 on thus :

“ In requital of that scurrilous character of an
 “ ingenious blasphemer, I must and do here return upon him the just charge of an impious blasphemer; telling him withal, that had he lived
 “ in the former times of our church, his gown
 “ would have been stripped off his back for his detestable blasphemies and heresies, and some other
 “ place found out for him to perch in than the top
 “ of St. Paul’s (he was dean of St. Paul’s),
 “ where at present he is placed, like a church
 “ weathercock, as he is, notable for nothing so
 “ much

“ much as standing high and turning round. And
“ now, if he likes not this kind of treatment, let
“ him thank his own virulence for it, in passing
“ such base reflections upon one who he might be
“ sure would repay him, and certainly will, though
“ he has not cleared the debt.”

And now let me ask my reader, whether he has not had a sufficient specimen of the spirit with which a *trinitarian controversy* has been conducted?

If he delights in such wit and such language, he may go in pursuit of his enjoyment either to Dr. Sherlock's *Vindication of the holy and ever blessed Trinity* (for such is the title), and to Dr. South's *Animadversions and Tritheism charged upon it*, or else to the next alehouse, where porters, carmen, and hackney coachmen assemble to regale themselves with spirituous liquor and spirited debate.

But notwithstanding this unhappy dispute, Dr. Sherlock and Dr. South were most respectable men and excellent divines. Dr. South, in particular, was an admirable wit, and a most powerful orator. I venerate the names of them both, and lament that they should thus have exposed themselves to deserved reproach. Let them who are inclined to engage in paper wars

observe, to what the spirit of controversy may lead; to the disgrace and injury of the controversialists, and of that sacred cause which they both originally intended to promote: a striking instance of human infirmity. Both these men preached, and I believe in the sincerity of their hearts, meekness and benevolence.

The little religious controversy which remains among us at present is usually conducted with candour. Abuse is seldom offered; and, whenever it appears, recoils upon its author. A polemic Christian divine is a contradiction in terms, if by *polemic* is understood, as both etymology and experience justify, a hostile soldier of Jesus Christ, contending, in the church militant, with the prohibited weapons of anger and violence for the personal glory of conquest.

It is greatly to be wished that men could be satisfied with maintaining their own principles and opinions in a dispassionate manner, and living conscientiously according to the system or sect which they may have adopted, without anxiously endeavouring to compel all others to unite in their persuasion. The most violent zeal is too often the least honourable in its motives. The violence is not derived from an honest regard for truth and the welfare of others, but from pride, ill temper, self interest, and
secular

secular ambition ; and it is as ineffectual in producing conviction, as it is in itself unreasonable and ungenerous.

It is not inconsistent with charity to suspect, (what the knowledge of the human heart strongly insinuates), that a love of distinction, and a desire to be looked up to as the founder of a new sect, are the true causes of many divisions and subdivisions which too often arise in religion. Far be it from man to pronounce decisively of the sentiments of the heart, which are only known with certainty by him who made it ; but when we see one man opposing with vehemence opinions and doctrines which the majority, apparently endowed with equal sense, and equally improved by education, receive with humble submission, it is difficult not to conclude, that he forms an undue estimate of his own sagacity, or is endeavouring to procure distinction from the sinister motives of vanity and pride. But to make use of religious pretences in support of sordid purposes of any kind, is a sort of hypocrisy which deservedly excites uncommon resentment.

I think the temper with which a religious controversy is conducted is one of the best criterions of sincerity ; and those who are duly on their guard against delusion, will be cautious of enlisting

enlisting under leaders, however plausible and eloquent, who forget, in their zeal for religion, its distinguishing grace, Christian Benevolence.

It has been apprehended by some, who respect the characters of both the disputants, that there was rather too much asperity and haughtiness beginning to display itself in a late controversy between a dignitary of the established church and a philosophical dissenter. The parties should certainly beware lest that warmth, which I believe to be an honest one, should deviate into the virulence of party rage, injure the Christian cause, and give occasion to the common adversaries both of themselves and the cause, to triumph over them. Spirit and magnanimity are certainly consistent with that forbearance without which Christianity is but a name. In this age the old question,

Tantæne animis cœlestibus Iræ?

will always be applied by the laity to their teachers, when their teachers treat each other with contumelious language. An offence is given by it, for which no learning or ingenuity displayed in the contest can make a recompence.

But I pass from religious to philosophical and literary controversy. It might be supposed that
pursuits,

pursuits, which bear the name of philosophical, would proceed with the most dispassionate moderation. But here also victory, rather than truth, is the object of the contest. Practical and theoretical philosophy are often divided; and many, whose understandings have been highly cultivated, are still subject to all the irritation of irascible affections.

Every scholar will recollect the virulent controversy between Bentley and Boyle on a book which was suspected of being spurious, but which, if allowed to be genuine, is of little value. Bentley displayed wonderful learning, and great wit and acuteness in the contest; and his acrimony is almost forgiven in return for his having enriched literature with the Dissertation on Phalaris. The parts of some appear to be drawn out and improved by spleen, which operates on them like the fabulous inspiration on the poets. Dr. Bentley is an instance of it, for, I believe, none of his works are equal to his controversial. Mr. Pope also, with every muse at hand, too frequently sought the aid of indignation; *fecit indignatio versus*.

Those who are acquainted with literary history can remember controversies conducted with an excess of warmth on the metre of a comic poet,

poet, in which divines, high in character, and high in ecclesiastical honour, gave a lamentable example of charity, superseded by the pride of erudition. So true is it that *knowledge puffeth up, and charity alone edifieth*. Every one knows of Bishop Warburton's learning; but where are the testimonies of his humility?

The wranglings of Cambridge, and the disputations at Oxford, are apt to give young men a controversial turn, which afterwards influences them both in life and literature. The disputations at Oxford are now indeed merely formal; but the wranglings at Cambridge still continue, and often infuse an acid into the mind which turns the milk of human kindness quite sour.

In days of yore the logical disputations in Oxford were the cause of ebullitions of rage among the academics, not less furious than any which have arisen in the world of politicks. In the warmth of syllogistic discussion, the ardent disputants have been known to rise from their seats, and terminate a dispute about *quiddities* by the exertion of muscular vigour, according to the manly system of the Broughtonian philosophy. This was certainly the stratagem of dunces; for, in these polemical altercations, the thickest sculls were most likely to gain the conquest.

Black

Black eyes and bloody noses were the trophies ; and there is reason to suppose from their language, that the abovesaid dean Sherlock and prebendary South would have had no objection to pull off their pudding sleeves and have it out, as the belligerent phrase is, amidst a circle of spectators, at the Temple Stairs, or in Gravel Lane.

There are no subjects either in literature or philosophy, notwithstanding the parade of professors, sufficiently momentous to justify, in a contest concerning them, the violation of the law of love. In the estimate of reason, employed in investigating what is most beneficial to society, as well as of sacred Scripture, charity is far more valuable than knowledge ; than knowledge of the most dignified kind, much more, therefore, than the knowledge of trifles, mere matters of taste, and curious speculation.

Whenever, therefore, a controversy arises, and it is to be hoped that liberal and candid controversies will always continue to arise, let each party be immediately on their guard, and resolve, whatever may happen, to keep in view the preservation of a respect for each other's personal happiness and reputation ; a respect which constitutes a great part of that charity which *never faileth*, and which, universally diffused, will contribute
more

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more to the good of mankind than the discoveries of a Newton.

A caution may indeed be necessary against indifference in the support of evident and useful truth ; an extreme into which some may lapse in the laudable endeavour to avoid intemperance of zeal ; but I am doubtful whether it is necessary to insist much on this caution, as the proud and angry passions, under every restraint, will be likely to produce a degree of warmth and energy sufficient for every laudable and beneficial purpose. Where a plant, from its inherent vigour, deviates into a detrimental luxuriancy, the gardener uses the pruning knife, and leaves the acceleration of growth to the powers of unassisted nature.

Upon reviewing the misery occasioned by contention, one cannot help indulging the reflection that the evils of man are great without unnecessary aggravation. In the little journey of our life, why should we encrease the inconvenience of rough roads and bad weather, by mutual ill-humour ? Why should we be wasps and hornets to each other ; since the stings of outrageous fortune are so pungent as scarcely to be endured ? Let us not, by adding sharpness and venom to their point, increase the anguish of their wound ; but rather let us learn to soften and sweeten society by practising, in all dissimilarity of sentiment,

ment, that admirable precept of philosophy and christianity, BEAR AND FORBEAR. *Veniam petimusque damusque vicissim.*

I will beg leave to call the attention of all controvertists to the vow of Dr. Hody, a learned and amiable man. Mr. Boyle quotes it for Dr. Bentley's benefit and Dr. Hody's honour, in the celebrated controversy on the Epistles of Phalaris.

FAXIT NUMEN, UT VEL ATERNO EGO
SILENTIO INTER NON SCRIBENTES DE-
LITESCAM, VEL SEMPER, UT VIRUM IN-
GENUUM, LIBERALIS AC GENEROSÆ EDU-
CATIONIS, VERÆQUE PHILOSOPHIÆ STU-
DIOSUM DECET, SCRIBAM: VERITATIS
UNICÆ INDAGATOR, ABSQUE OMNI STYLI
ACERBITATE, MITIS, URBANUS, CANDI-
DUS, AD ID QUOD INDECENS EST ADEO
NON PRONUS, UT NEC MOVENDUS: NU-
GARUM DENIQUE CONTEMPTOR.

It is the duty of every writer to be just and candid, and to avoid all partiality and prejudice. The above is a translation of the Latin text, which is a vow of silence and candor.

C H A P. IV.

More specimens of controversy—Of the style of some of Milton's Latin Works, particularly his Defences of the people of England.—Genus irritabile vatium.—Milton's desertion of poetry for controversy deplored.

FROM all who are happy enough to have a taste for poetry, and a love of liberty, whatever work is descending to future ages with the name of MILTON on the title page, cannot fail to attract regard. The vigour of his mind, and the depth of his learning, mark his works with strong features, with vigour and variety of stile, with solidity and extent of knowledge.

His History of England, is perhaps an exception. A subject which one would have thought likely to kindle the fire of his genius, seems to be unaccountably deficient in his usual spirit. It is really dull. But his *Defence of the People of England*, his *Second Defence*, and his *Defence of himself*, display all the fire, the nervous, the masculine eloquence of the apologist, in a diction of classical beauty.

It is at the same time matter of astonishment and regret, that a mind so elegant, a genius so pre-eminently

eminently sublime as MILTON's, should descend to the very lowest vulgarity of personal abuse. His *Defensiones* abound in jokes and sarcasms, which though sometimes severe and ingenious, are often puerile and scurrilous. His susceptible temper seems to have been heated too intensely by contest, and he became unable to discuss the subject with the dispassionate coolness of a philosopher. That fervid glow which in poetry produced a due degree of animation, kindled a flame in his political writings, which renders them too violent to be reconcileable to the just decisions of reason.

I mean not to be understood as entering into the merits of any political questions discussed in the *Defensiones*; but as considering them merely in a critical and historical view, and as curious pieces of controversial composition.

That fine piece of soft melancholy, the *Icon Basilikè*, raised an universal sympathy for the misfortunes of the prince whose undisguised feelings it was supposed to display with fidelity. The tide of popular fury seemed, on its publication, to flow impetuously against the regicides. Milton was supposed by his partizans the best able, and was therefore called upon by them, and urged by his own inclination to vilify this favourite book, and to diminish its popularity. As the king's
book

book was entitled, *The Image of the King*, Milton called his answer, *The Image Breaker*.

On the other side, the son of the departed author and his adherents, were no less solicitous to defend the royal cause, and to represent the conduct of the regicides in the blackest colours of vindictive rhetoric. Salmasius, who enjoyed the reputation of being the most accomplished scholar of his time, was a professor in the university of Leyden; and in consequence of his reputation, employed by the exiled prince to write a defence of his unfortunate father. Salmasius undertook the cause, and rapidly produced, for he was a most rapid writer, a prolix treatise in Latin, to which he gave the title of *Defensio regia pro Carolo primo*.

In this work it was not easy to do justice to his subject without animadverting on the author of the *Iconoclastes* or the *Image Breaker*. He roused a lion. Milton rose with the gigantic arm of genius, and crushed his antagonist.

The title of his first defence was *Joannes Miltoni Angli Defensio, contra Claudii anonymi aliàs Salmasii, defensionem regiam*. The contempt with which he treats Salmasius, is beyond all bounds and example; and such as was by no means deserved; for Salmasius was a scholar of uncommon learning, and if he maintained the cause
which

which he was employed to espouse, but feebly, he preserved a due regard to decency and moderation, both which were neglected by Milton.

Among other unbecoming levities, Milton condescends to the very low wit of playing upon names. He awkwardly compares Salmasius, from the similarity of sound, to the fountain *Salmacis* in Caria, which had the fabulous property of depriving those who bathed in it of half their virility, as the effeminate doctrine of Salmasius tended, in Milton's opinion, to deprive men of their rights as men, that is of the privileges of a republick. In another book, he ridicules his supposed opponent *More*, by alluding to *MOROS* the Greek for a fool, to *MORUS* a mulberry-tree, and to *sycamorus*, a sycamore.

Milton is said to have received a thousand pounds for his *Defensio pro populo Anglicano*. It was succeeded by his *Defensio secunda*, a piece of still more virulence, excited by new provocation. The idea of his being paid detracts something from the honour of his zeal.

There appeared in the midst of this controversy a book entitled, *The Cry of the King's Blood to Heaven against the English Parricides*. It was attributed to Alexander More, a Scotchman, whose character Milton paints in the most odious colours. The rage with which Milton attacks him, evinces that

that *the Cry to Heaven* was well calculated to raise the popular resentment against the regicides. He would not have exerted himself so vigorously against a feeble adversary, who had thrown only a *telum imbellè sine ictu*, a weak and pointless weapon. Milton had possessed himself of some scandalous anecdotes against More, and enlarges on them with all the triumph of vindictive glee. After all, *proh Deum atque hominum fidem!* More was not the author. The book was written by Peter du Moulin, afterwards prebendary of Canterbury, who, for the sake of avoiding the odium which it might occasion, had engaged More to own it, and had industriously given out that More was the writer. More had cause to repent of his acquiescence when it was too late; for Milton caused him to smart severely both in his *Defensio Secunda*, and his *Defensio pro se*. This man is drawn in a shape so ugly as raises at once both hatred and contempt. When he who drew Death, Sin, and Satan, in a style so masterly, undertook to draw a caricature, it will readily be imagined that luckless was the wight who sat for the picture.

The *Defensio Secunda* must be commended as a fine piece of eloquence. There is in it the *vis ignea* of genius. There is even a glimmering of that light which was to burst forth in all

its majesty in the *Paradise Lost*. I wish the dignity of the sentiments had uniformly accorded with the magnificence of expression. But this noble spirit, this ardent lover of freedom, often descends from the towering heights of eloquence to grovel in the miry ways of spiteful and plebeian obloquy. The vulgarity of his appellations is a little concealed by the veil of an ancient language, the sound of which, even when it conveys ribaldry, retains its dignity in a modern ear; but if it were properly translated, it would seem to an English reader the language of a porter, rather than of the man to whom nature had given

Mens sublimior atque os
Magna sonaturum;

and who was formed with powers to penetrate

—Extra flammantia mœnia mundi.

Milton, ashamed to have displayed so much rancour on a mistaken object, did not believe, or at least pretended not to believe, but that More was the author of *The Cry to Heaven*. He therefore wrote a Third Defence, which he entitled *Auctoris pro se Defensio contra Alexandrum Morum*. There is the same vein of satire in this as in the other; the same bitterness, and the same elegance. Notwithstanding the unjust

D

acrimony

acrimony abounding in many parts of them, these three memorable Defences are among the finest Philippics of modern ages; they unite in them the beauty of Ciceronian copiousness, and the penetrating force of Demosthenic vehemence.

Every Muse must weep that so much fire and so much eloquence, that the genius which could describe the delicious groves of Eden, should be wasted on a temporary subject, which, however interesting when parties were violent, is now suffered to sleep in neglect, if not in oblivion. The finest writing in politics can scarcely give immortality. When persons are dead and things forgotten which gave rise to the controversy, the elegance of the composition will only be attended to by those who delight in fine writing as a curiosity, like the Medalist in coins which cease to be current. The common people would prefer a halfpenny to an antique.

In taste, Milton had an indisputable superiority over all his antagonists. Salmasius, the greatest of them, though a most respectable scholar, had no just claim to poetical genius, or peculiar refinement of taste. It might have been supposed that he would have been accurate in his Latinity. But Milton censures him severely for the use of the word *Persona* in a sense unclassical. Salmasius had said, in his preface

face to the *Defensio Regia*; "Horribilis nuper nuntius aures nostros atroci vulnere, sed magis mentes, perculit, de parricidio apud Anglos in *Persona Regis*, sacrilegorum hominum nefariâ conspiratione, admissio." Milton asks, in the tone of a schoolmaster, after ridiculing this pompous passage, which is certainly not well written; "Quid, quæso, est parricidium in persona regis admittere? Quid in *persona* regis? Quæ unquam Latinitas sic loquuta est."

Dr. Johnson rather defends Salmasius's use of the word *Persona*, and cites in support of it the passage from Juvenal:

Cum fædior omni
Crimine persona est.

But Juvenal himself did not write the purest Latin, such at least as would have been approved in the age of Augustus, the model of Milton; and Dr. Johnson was not so good a judge of Latin words as of English; for in his few Latin *poemata* there are many unclassical modes of expression.

This sagacious biographer, who on this occasion is not partial to him, accuses Milton of a solecism in the words which he insultingly addresses to Salmasius immediately after having chastised him for the impropriety of *Persona*. Milton

says, "Vapulandum te propino grammatistis tuis." *Vapulo* being a neuter verb, every schoolboy in the head classes will observe, that it will not be easy to find in it the future in *du*. But Dr. Johnson should have acknowledged, if he knew it, that he was not the first who discovered this error. It was noticed long before by Vavassor de Epigrammate, by Crenius in his *Animadversiones Philologicæ*, and by Ker in his *Observations on the Latin Tongue*. In that part of Ker's work which relates to barbarous and vicious modes of expression, speaking of *vapulandum*, he says, in reference to it, "*Pinguis solæcismus Miltono excidit; ubi Salmasium ob solæcismum exagitavit.*" This lapse of Milton was the less to be excused, because it happened while he was censuring a disputable error in Salmasius with an air of haughty triumph and unrelenting severity. Milton, though well acquainted with the purity and accuracy of the Latin, was not so scrupulously cautious as not to suffer, in the precipitation of passion, many words and phrases to escape him, which grammarians and critics might justly reprehend.

What a loss to the admirers of polite letters, that he who could write *L'Allegro*, *Il Penseroso*, the Battles of Angels, and the Loves of Adam and Eve, should suffer his life to waste in disagreeable and importunate controversy, in
rough

rough and uncultivated fields, where briars and nettles flourished instead of flowers and laurels.

Salmasius attributes the loss of Milton's sight to the labour of the controversy; and to the disgrace of humanity, Milton is said to have expressed some complacency in the idea that his severity had shortened the days of poor Salmasius.

Some had considered the blindness of Milton as a judgment on him for defending the crime of the Regicides, or for some other atrocious offence. I cite the following passage from Milton's *Defensio Secunda*, on the subject of his blindness, and the cruel imputation of it to a judicial curse. After enumerating many great men who had been blind from no fault of their own, he proceeds:

“ Ad me quod attinet, te testor, Deus, mentis intimæ, cogitationumque omnium indagator, me nullius rei, (quanquam hoc apud me sæpius, & quàm maxime potui, seriò quæsi, & recessus vitæ omnes excussi) nullius vel recens vel olim commissi, mihi met conscium esse, cujus atrocitas hanc mihi præ cæteris calamitatem creare, aut accersisse meritò potuerit. Quod etiam ullo tempore scripsi (quoniam hoc nunc me luere quasi piaculum regii existimant, atque adeò triumphant)

“ testor itidem Deum, me nihil istiusmodi scrip-
 “ sisse, quod non rectum & verum Deòque gra-
 “ tum esse, & persuaferim tum mihi, & etiam-
 “ num persuasus sim; idque nullâ ambitione,
 “ lucro, aut gloriâ ductus; sed officii, sed ho-
 “ nesti, sed pietatis in patriam ratione solâ; nec
 “ reipublicæ tantum, sed Ecclesiæ quoque libe-
 “ randæ causâ potissimum fecisse: adeò ut cum
 “ datum mihi publicè esset illud in defensionem
 “ regiam negotium, eodémque tempore & ad-
 “ versâ simul valetudine, & oculo jam penè al-
 “ tero amisso conflictarer, prædiceréntque di-
 “ fertè medici, si hunc laborem suscepissem,
 “ fore, ut utrumque brevi amitterem, nihil istâ
 “ præmonitione deterritus, non medici nè Æs-
 “ culapii quidem Epidaurii ex adyto vocem, sed
 “ *divinioris cujusdam intus monitoris viderer*
 “ *mihi audire*; duâsque sortes, fatali quodam
 “ nutu, jam mihi propositas, hinc cæcitatem,
 “ indè officium; aut oculorum jacturam neces-
 “ sariò faciendam, aut summum officium dese-
 “ rendum: occurrebântque animo bina illa fata,
 “ quæ retulisse Delphis consulentem de se ma-
 “ trem, narrat Thetidis filius.

Διχθαδίας κῆρας φερέμεν θανάτοιο τίλοσδι.

Εἰ μὲν κ' αὖθις μένων τρώων πόλιν ἀμφιμάχωμαι

“Ὀλίγο μὲν μοι νόστος· αἰτάρ κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται.

Εἰ δὲ κεν οἴκαδ' ἔλωμαι φίλην εἰς πατρίδα γαῖαν.

“Ὀλετό μοι κλέος ἰσθλόν. ἐπὶ δὲ μὲν μοι αἶψα

“Ἔσσιται. —————

Iliad. 9.

Duplicia

Duplicia fata ducere ad mortis finem :
 Si hic manens circa Troum urbem pugnavero,
 Amittitur mihi reditus ; sed Gloria immortalis erit,
 Si domum revertor dulce ad Patrium solum,
 Amittitur mihi Gloria pulcra, sed diuturna vita
 Erit.—

“ Unde sic mecum reputabam, multos gra-
 “ viore malo minus bonum, morte gloriam, re-
 “ demisse ; mihi contrà majus bonum minore
 “ cum malo proponi : ut possem cum cæcitate
 “ sola vel honestissimum officii munus implere ;
 “ quod ut ipsa gloria per se est solidius, ità cuique
 “ optatius atque antiquius debet esse. Hac igitur
 “ tam brevi luminum usurâ, quanta maxima
 “ quivi cum utilitate publica, quoad liceret,
 “ fruendum esse statui. Videtis quid prætule-
 “ rim, quid amiserim, quâ inductus ratione :
 “ *desinant ergò judiciorum Dei calumniatores*
 “ *maledicere*, deque me somnia sibi fingere ;
 “ sic denique habento ; me fortis meæ neque
 “ pigere neque poenitere ; immotum atque
 “ fixum in sententia perstare ; Deum iratum
 “ neque sentire, neque habere, immò maximis
 “ in rebus clementiam ejus & benignitatem erga
 “ me paternam experiri atque agnoscere ; in
 “ hoc præsertim, quòd solante ipso atque ani-
 “ mum confirmante in ejus divina voluntate
 “ acquiescam ; quid is largitus mihi sit, quàm
 “ quid negaverit sæpius cogitans : postremò

" nolle me cum suo quovis rectissimè facio,
 " facti mei conscientiam permutare, aut recor-
 " dationem ejus gratam mihi semper atque tran-
 " quillam deponere. Ad cæcitatem denique
 " quod attinet, malle me, si necesse est, meam,
 " quam vel suam, More, vel tuam. Vestra
 " imis sensibus immersa, nequid sani videatis aut
 " solidi, mentem obcæcat : mea, quam objicitis,
 " colorem tantummodo rebus & superficiem
 " demit ; quod verum ac stabile in iis est, con-
 " temptioni mentis non adimit. Quam multa
 " deinde sunt quæ videre nollem, quam multa
 " quæ possem libens non videre, quam pauca
 " reliqua sunt quæ videre cupiam. Sed neque
 " ego cæcis, afflictis, mœrentibus, imbecillis,
 " tametsi vos id miserum ducitis, aggregari me
 " discrutior ; quandoquidem spes est, eo me
 " propius ad misericordiam summi patris atque
 " tutelam pertinere. Est quoddam per imbecil-
 " litatem, præeunte Apostolo, ad maximas
 " vires iter : *sim ego debilissimus, dummodo in mea*
 " *debilitate immortalis ille & melior vigor eo se*
 " *efficacius exerat ; dummodo in meis tenebris*
 " *divini vultus lumen eo clariùs eluceat ; tum*
 " *enim infirmissimus ero simul & validissimus,*
 " *cæcus eodem tempore & perspicacissimus ; hac*
 " *possim ego infirmitate consummari, hac per-*
 " *fici, possim in hac obscuritate sic ego irra-*
 " *diari.*"

Milton

Milton was thought by many, in his controversial defence of rebellion, to have resembled too much his own fallen angel, for he also had a powerful and seducing eloquence, and could make the worse appear the better cause. This censure of Milton is too severe; but they who attack others with severity must expect retaliation.

C H A P. V.

The pride of human reason.—False philosophy interfering in divinity—commonly founded in pride. Human infirmity ought to teach piety and humility.

THERE is nothing of which a thinking man is so feelingly convinced as of his own weakness and fallibility. He comes into the world in a forlorn and helpless state; and continues ignorant of his own nature, and of every thing around him, till he has been informed by long instruction, and the conclusions drawn from personal experience. Passions, prejudices, diseases, accidents, interpose to prevent him from forming opinions on which he can depend with certainty even in the common affairs of life. Most men are ready to acknowledge this in writing and conversation, and yet few appear to act as if they really believed it to be true.

What is more common than obstinacy? How reluctant are men to confess themselves to have been in an error! One would conclude from this circumstance that they are fully confident of rectitude. Yet this is not the case, and their conscience convinces them of the fallibility,
while

while their pride intervenes to prohibit the avowal.

But the pride of human reason is no where more visible than in the writings of those who assume the name of Philosophers, and *Men of a liberal way of thinking*. They claim the right and the ability of deciding on every subject which can fall under the human cognizance. They judge with dogmatism; they pronounce with authority.

Religion is their favourite topic; and in the exercise of their disputatious talents, they sit in judgment on their Maker and his ordinances. They see, indeed; that Christianity is addressed to something very different from the reasoning faculty; but they acknowledge no criterion of truth but reason, and think at the same time, that none possess it in a state of so much perfection as themselves. According to a vulgar phrase, they see further into a *Millstone* than he who picks it.

Their usual pretence, in their attacks upon religion, is a love of truth, and an universal benevolence, which cannot endure that men should any longer wander in darkness, terrified with the hobgoblins of superstition. They resolve, most generously, to illuminate the path by the lamp of their own reason, and to lay the ghosts

by *their good learning*. They rise in their own conceit the solar luminaries of the moral hemisphere.

The writings of these philosophers seem to constitute that which is styled in the Scriptures, Vain Philosophy. It is that knowledge which puffeth up, and has no connection with the charity which edifieth. The motives of these men appear to have little resemblance to those of real benignity of disposition; for they evidently originate in the pride of reason; and pride is incompatible with true benevolence, though it often makes pretensions to it for the accomplishment of its mean and selfish purposes.

That the writings of many modern sceptics or philosophers, as they are frequently named, originate in pride, is collected from the style of authority and decision, with which they pronounce on systems and opinions which the rest of the world either readily receive or fear to reject. They must suppose either that they are wiser or honest than others, who in other respects appear to be their equals or superiors, who have had a similar or better education, and all other opportunities of deriving equal instruction.

They are very fond of accusing all men who think differently from themselves of prejudice.

They

They suppose themselves elevated to that beautiful and enviable height, which Lucretius describes when he speaks of the happiness of being enabled, by philosophy, to look down and enjoy the errors of those who are unenlightened.

Self, it must be acknowledged, after all our pretensions to public spirit, is the principle of most of our actions. If men were openly to profess it, no one would listen to their doctrines. They therefore pretend a zeal for truth, for mankind, for every thing generous, right, and good; and, when there is no danger, offer to expose themselves to every inconvenience in the accomplishment of their god-like intentions. So plausible a prologue secures an audience. The philosopher gains his object; he is distinguished, and his vanity is gratified. If he is at the same time approved, his avarice and ambition are rewarded with popular favour.

While a writer takes the part of virtue and decency, and of every thing which contributes to promote the real and substantial happiness of mankind, the world ought not too scrupulously to investigate his secret motives; but to give him credit for the generosity which he professes, and, perhaps, believes himself to feel. But when distinction is sought by attacking every thing sacred

and serious, the vain philosopher ought to be punished by that which will hurt him most, universal contempt and neglect. To oppose him with argument gratifies his vanity, and rewards him for his labours. Truth was not so much his object as fame; and therefore if he raises himself to distinction, he little regards the cause which he undertook to support. He has gained the eminence. Let the ladder fall.

It is observed in all departments, that the least skilful are the most confident, and that true merit is known by no criterion so certain as by modesty. The wisest among the antient philosophers appear to have been men of real humility. This amiable quality is very remarkable in the great Socrates; but the instance is too well known to be formally and tediously repeated.

There is an example infinitely more illustrious. The Saviour of mankind never exhibited the least appearance of such confidence as a modern prater of scepticism, who thinks blasphemy wit, and singularity wisdom.

There is, I think, every reason to believe, that nothing would contribute more to real wisdom and happiness than an universal diffidence in the strength of unassisted reason. In order to
produce

produce the growth of this virtue, pride, that noxious weed, must be destroyed from the roots. Nothing amiable, nothing of true christian charity, can flourish in the heart which is overrun by the pride of human reason. Philosophers have been always disputing on the *summum bonum*, and on the nature of true wisdom. The christian discovers, without the intervention of learning, that the grace of God is the highest happiness to which his nature can attain, and that the only wisdom is that which leads to humility and charity. God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.

It is remarkable, that some of the greatest philosophers of this country were not only religious in their lives and manners, but defenders of religion in their writings; such were Bacon, Newton, Locke, and Addison; men, whose principal excellence was the vigour of their reason. I entertain a due respect for the ingenuity and veracity of many among the modern philosophers, but I do not conceive that they are better qualified, either by nature or by art, than their illustrious predecessors, Bacon, Newton, Locke, and Addison. If ever any man could be supposed to be justly proud of human reason, I should imagine it might be the author of the Essay on the Human Understanding, the discoverer of the True System

System of the Universe, the inventor of the *Novum Organum*. Some may not chuse to place Mr. Addison among these, because he is esteemed by metaphysical freethinkers, rather a polite scholar than a profound philosopher; though it is my own opinion, that few of those who pretend to philosophy have shewn an understanding superior to that which distinguishes this pure and elegant moralist.

These great men carried their improvements to a most admirable height; but they never lost sight of human weakness, of their dependence upon God, of the true gospel philosophy, and of that love and charity which constitutes the truest wisdom, and most substantial happiness in the present state. I would rather follow the examples of such men than obtain the applause of every pretending wit and critic, who dictates blasphemous witticisms in the school of Voltaire.

No philosophy is valuable which does not contribute to render its possessor rationally and permanently happy. The knowledge of Jesus Christ can alone effect this most desirable purpose. All other wisdom originates in the pride of man, and will prove his weakness by terminating in his misery. This soothes and calms the bosom under all the disquietudes of a turbulent life;
and

and when the clouds of adversity, sickness, or death impend, points out a serene sky. This is the *panacea* in moral philosophy, the remedy for all distempers of the mind. This is the panoply that shields the wearers from every enemy. Life, without the comforts of the christian philosophy, is a state of wretchedness; but with them, it anticipates the enjoyments of a better state.

Happy are those who feel the truth of this doctrine at an early period of their lives. The sooner they begin to live to God, the sooner they begin to taste of real felicity. All else is shadowy and vanishes into nothing, at the very moment of fancied acquisition.

But does this happiness fall into our possession without any efforts on our own parts? Certainly not. Much is to be done by us, and the earlier we begin, in this work, as in all others, the better we shall succeed, and the sooner be happy. It is the grand purpose of our existence, and ought to be the first and last labour of our lives. Habitual prayer and serious reading and reflection are the most efficacious means of giving the mind a devotional propensity.

The pleasures of religion are the greatest of which our nature is capable. They are acknowledged

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known to be such by all who have felt them in their purity. Those indeed who have formed wrong notions of religion, or who have been educated and introduced into life without a due tincture of it, attribute all such assertions to hypocrisy or enthusiasm. Their reason is their god, and they worship it with all the attachment of real adoration. But the time will come, when they will wish that they had depended less upon themselves, and more upon HIM WHO IS MIGHTY TO SAVE; before whom, the wisdom of the most arrogant and most learned philosopher is little better than infantine imbecillity.

To know oneself was once deemed the highest wisdom: and what can a man learn with more certainty from the knowledge of himself, than that he is a poor, dependent creature; and, with all his confidence in the best natural abilities, improved by the best cultivation, unable fully to comprehend the common objects which he sees around; unable to secure his happiness, or his consistency, a single hour; and therefore then only capable of secure joy and permanent tranquillity when he throws himself into the arms of Omnipotence.

C H A P. VI.

*The tedium of literary sameness.—Constant imitation.—Affectation.—The same modes of varying.
O imitatores servum pecus!*

THE physicians call a medicine which contains efficient ingredients in a small volume, and of a pleasant or tolerable taste, an elegant medicine. Moralists, who are the physicians of the mind, have usually been endeavouring to render their prescriptions palatable by the form of administering them, and to present their readers with an elegant medicine, a moral cathartic, gilded to please the eye, and sweetened to sooth the taste.

He who writes on morality usually gives advice; a free gift, which is the least acceptable of all bounties, as, while it adds to our wisdom, it derogates from what we value a great deal more, our pride or self-esteem. The draught is nauseous, though salubrious; hence the writer endeavours to borrow something from art, to render it an elegant medicine. He infuses into the phial a little syrup of sugar, or a comfortable cordial, that the patient may not make wry faces, or throw it out of the window.

No

No form has in England been more frequently chosen for this purpose, than that of diurnal or periodical papers. Doctor Addison, and a few others, eminent in the faculty, made them very agreeable; but *repetatur haustus* has been so frequently put on the labels by succeeding practitioners, that the salutary cordial, the *confectio cardiaca*, operates at last like a dose of *ipe-cacua*na.

Yet every mode of introducing an air of novelty has been tried by the periodical writers. Allegories, Diaries, Eastern Tales, Little Novels, Letters from Correspondents, Humour, Irony, Argument, and Declamation, have been used to diversify the form of conveying instruction. They were successful, till the repetition of the same modes of diversification caused a nausea.

Occidit miseros crambe repetita.

The Spectator himself talked so much about the fair sex, that, as tradition informs us, his readers began to be weary, and wished him to take his leave. What his animadversions on tuckers, petticoats, and fans, might effect, I do not know; but at present all such papers, though they may raise a smile, seem to produce little attention, and no reformation.

But

But though the modes of conveying instruction may lose their estimation by continual recurrence, yet instruction itself can never be depreciated if it is founded on the solid basis of experience and sound reason; and perhaps the best method of conveying it is that which is plainly addressed to the understanding, without any contrivance or laborious attempt at novelty of form, which too often terminates in affectation. In an Eastern tale I may be pleased with the language, with the imagery, with the ingenuity of the invention; but as to the moral or instruction to be derived from it, it would at present be more agreeable and efficacious if delivered in plain terms, without those visible and palpable artifices, which are now become trite.

Allegories also are now, from their frequency, more valuable for the diction and splendid figures which the fancy paints, than for their moral efficacy; which might be better accomplished in a less operose and indistinct manner.

Evident imitation, if unsuccessful, becomes contemptible; and even if it resemble its original, it is still considered, like a good copy of a fine picture, of a very subordinate value, and seldom pleases. Diaries of Belles and Beaus, Extraordinary Intelligence, Cross Readings of newspapers, are now become stale and threadbare

bare pieces of wit. Indeed, every mode of humour which the Spectator adopted has been imitated so often as to have lost its grace.

The plain and unaffected manner of uttering ideas and sentiments can never be out of fashion; because it is the very manner which nature herself teaches. Apparel can never be out of fashion, though the cut of a coat, the shape of a shoe, may vary every month. The great advantage of adhering to nature in the works of art, is, that what was once excellent will always be so; what once gave a rational pleasure will continue to give it, like a natural spring, which, though it may not throw its waters into so great a variety of forms as the artificial fountain of the engineer, will continue to supply an exuberant stream when the other is exhausted or destroyed.

Labitur et labetur in omne volubilis ævum.

Good sense, expressed in good language, interesting subjects of learning familiarized to the curious, or rendered agreeable to the idle, cannot fail of being acceptable, though they should appear in the unadorned dress of a direct discourse; but in the imitative garb of others they are in danger of becoming ridiculous.

The very names signed to supposititious letters

ters in periodical works become nauseous by continual repetition. The Spectator has a great number of them, and they were entertaining enough for once; but who can bear, without exclaiming, *Ohe jam satis est!* the never ceasing iteration of Kitty Termagant, Susanna Frost, Ralph Crotchett, Abraham Spy, Mary Meanwell, Rebecca Nettletop, Eve Afterday, which occur to me in a moment on casually opening a volume of the Spectator? Imitation of things so easily imitable becomes flat and vapid. It is better to communicate the sentiments intended to be conveyed by these characters and names without a veil, than with one so transparent and so antiquated, as neither to serve the purpose of a covering nor of an ornament.

The pourtraying of characters in Greek and Latin names, such as Curio, Gelasimus, Belinda, Opfinous, though a very convenient mode of conveying instruction, begins, from its everlasting use, to be rather irksome. It was at first a lively way of speaking an author's thoughts in the imaginary character. But the method is so common, that the natural way of addressing the reader is now more agreeable and effectual. When fictitious names were first used, the reader was sometimes, usefully for himself, deceived into an opinion, that a real character was concealed under the masque;
but

but he now knows, as well as the author himself, that it is only an imitative trick, used when invention is at a loss to diversify the discourse.

It is the imitation, for ever repeated, of mere modes of conveying ideas, which renders periodical papers of great merit rather distasteful. Good thoughts delivered in this miscellaneous manner cannot fail of being agreeable, provided the reader is not palled with attempts to please him by mere tricks, which he has been so much accustomed to already, as not to be in the least pleased by them, but rather to consider them as impediments to the main business, the discovery of the doctrine or opinion of the author.

The insertion of letters from pretended correspondents is a convenient mode of expressing some ideas and characters which an author could not so well, or so probably express in his own character. It may be allowed for its convenience; but, when unnecessary, it ceases at present to please, because the artifice is visible, and no longer leaves the reader in doubt whether the letter comes from a real correspondent, which was the original deception. The reader knows, that he who sends and he who receives and comments on the letter, is the same person; and

and if he looks at the signature he may give a shrewd guess what is the subject, as the name is commonly a compound of the epithets or words which describe the character. But I must take care here (for *Cynthus aurem vellit*) not to make a law which will operate against myself; for, in the course of these Winter Evenings, I shall sometimes have occasion for a country or a London correspondent, and must solicit the reader's indulgence.

Indeed the plan of diurnal essays has been so frequently pursued, as to be in danger of producing that effect which a satiety, even of excellence, is too apt to produce on human nature, one of whose strongest appetites is for novelty.

But if affectation, and too servile an imitation, are avoided, there can be no rational objection to communicating ideas on any subject of morality, learning, science, arts, or taste, in short miscellaneous treatises. Modes may be disgusting, but truth and reason must continue to give satisfaction, whether communicated in the form and under the title of diurnal or periodical essays, or of just and legitimate systems.

E

Just

Just and legitimate systems are properly addressed to one kind of readers; but not to all. They are perhaps improving and delightful to professed students; while to the general reader, they appear heavy and tedious. *Laudant illa, sed ista legunt.*

Readers may be subdivided into a thousand different classes. In a comprehensive division, they may be separated into the professional, philosophical, and miscellaneous.

Professional readers, those who read either to qualify for the assumption of a profession, or to regulate the conduct and exercise of one already assumed, require regular and complete treatises, according to Aristotle's description, with a beginning, a middle, and an end, in all the formality of method. However tedious and dull, they must go through such books as furnish professional knowledge. Their reading is a duty. They must proceed in the appointed road, like the stage coach, whatever be the weather, and whether the country, and prospects around it, are pleasant or dreary. They must drink at the fountain head, whether the water flows copiously in spontaneous streams, or whether it is to be drawn from the well by persevering labour.

Philosophical

Philosophical readers, those whose abilities, opportunities, and ambition, lead them to attempt improvements in science, must also penetrate to the *interiora rerum*, and cut through rocks and mountains, like Hannibal, in ascending the eminences to which they aspire. They are not to be diverted in their progress, by listening, like the shepherd, to the purling of the streamlet, and the song of the nightingale, nor by culling the cowslip of the meadows. Their very toil is a delight; and they come forth at last Bacons, Boyles, Lockes, and Newtons.

But the miscellaneous readers are certainly the most numerous; and, as they form not only a majority, but a very respectable part of mankind, their literary wants are worthy of supply. They consist of all conditions, of the young and the old, the gentleman and the merchant, the soldier, the mariner, the subordinate practitioner in medicine and law, of those who hold places in public offices, of the philosopher and professor, in their leisure; and lastly, though not the least numerous or important, of the ladies. A beard was once the mark of a philosopher; but in the present age it is not uncommon to see wisdom and taste united with a fine assemblage of features in a delicate female face.

Such students are not to be sent to dull libraries, to pore over folios larger than their band-boxes.

This being a commercial country, let us suppose the case of a merchant, whose education has been liberal, and whose turn of mind gives him a taste for the pleasure of polite letters. His time is much occupied by the necessary employments of his counting house. He must write letters, attend the Exchange, and see company; yet he has a love for books, and wishes to spend some time in his book-room. He goes to his villa in the evening, and remains there a day or two; when some weighty concern calls for all his attention. In a life of business, with little leisure, and with that little liable to interruption, shall he read folios and dry treatises, in the Aristotelian style and regularity? He wishes he could perhaps; but he reads for amusement chiefly, and he requires something which he can read and comprehend in a short time. What so well adapted as an elegant miscellany? and hence it is that the *Spectator*, one of the first books calculated for universal use, was universally read, and still continues in high estimation.

“The PHILOSOPHER teacheth,” says Sir Philip Sydney, “but he teacheth obscurely, so as the learned only can understand him; that is to say,

“ say, *he teacheth them that are already taught.*”—
 For the people there must be a POPULAR philosopher; and he must address them, not like a professor in the dreary schools of an antiquated university, but like Socrates, walking among the people, and familiarising his doctrines to the understanding and taste of those who are found in the shop, the warehouse, the Exchange, the office, and even the manufactory. Life, at all times, in every part, under every passion and every action, admits of moral philosophy. It is not necessary that there should always be a professor's chair, a pulpit, a school, a formal lecture; since at the table, in the parlour, in the garden, in the fields, there is occasion and opportunity for familiar instruction. A pocket volume, an *Enchiridion*, or a *Manual*, accompanies a man in his walks, in his chariot, in the coffee-house, and in all the haunts of busy man.

Miscellanies indeed of this sort are not without the sanction of antient examples, if any thing but their own utility is necessary to recommend them. All works which bear the title of *Saturæ*, are miscellaneous. What are Seneca's *Epistles* but moral miscellanies? What are Plutarch's *Opuscula*? What Horace's *Sermones*? None of them systematical treatises, but popular essays, highly pleasing and improving

to the people at large, for whom they were designed. I could enlarge the list by the Deipnosophists of Athenæus, the Saturnalia of Macrobius, and many works of the grammarians, or professed literati of early ages. The mind is nourished by variety of food, the *farrago libelli*, like the body by fish, flesh, fowl, and vegetables.

If a writer can be so happy as to present his reader with good sense, sound and just reasoning well expressed, his work can never be entirely antiquated; because reason, the internal man, like the external, must always continue the same. Men may be disgusted with the tricks of cookery, and sick of made dishes fancifully seasoned, and constantly served up; but substantial food will always be relished by guests whose palates are not vitiated by disease.

That form in which the ideas of a miscellaneous writer can be most clearly and agreeably exhibited is certainly to be preferred; but every proper ornament of style and method may be judiciously applied, without having recourse to little arts which have lost their grace and power by being so frequently used already, as to be anticipated, and even nauseated by the reader, who is apt to yawn over them and exclaim,

Tædet harum quotidianarum formarum.

C H A P. VII.

The little tendency of a life of letters, WITHOUT A PROFESSION, to make a man's fortune, or raise him to civil honours, preferment, or favour among the great—Gloria quantalibet, quid erit si gloria tantum?—Its own consolations and enjoyments are still sufficient to recommend it.

SIR William Jones, whose early acquaintance with oriental learning and premature accomplishments in all polite letters, promised an uncommon eminence in the maturer periods of his life, laments, in one of his last publications, that the profession of letters, though laborious, leads to little benefit; that it contributes neither to enrich nor elevate, in civil life, either the professor or his family. He therefore takes a tender leave of the beloved region of the Muses,

—Et desertis Aganippes
Vallibus.

offers himself a votary of wealth and honour in the profession of the law. He relinquishes the barren hill of Parnassus, and seems to be cultivating with success a richer field.

The first love is not easily forgotten; and Sir William, amidst his severer studies, still

devotes some attention to his old friends the Muses, and the public will probably be gratified by many flowers of Asiatic growth, selected by his elegant taste.

But what he so feelingly lamented is certainly true. The finest compositions, the most laborious works of mere literature, would never have made him a judge, or raised him one step on the ladder of ambition. As children admire the peacock's plumage, and wish to pluck a feather from his tail; so the great, who have sense enough, admire fine writing, and derive a pleasure from the perusal. They read, are pleased; they praise and forget. Their interest must be exerted to pay the tutor of their children at the public expence; or to secure parliamentary votes by bartering for them the cure of souls, or the *otium cum dignitate* of some rich cathedral. "Such an one is an excellent poet, and I hear the poor man is in narrow circumstances; but really every thing in my gift has been engaged to the members for two or three boroughs, and the minister's list for prebendaries has been for some time filled with the travelling companions and domestic tutors of several young lords who will have great weight in both houses. I wish I could do something for so ingenious a man; but there is nothing to be done for ourselves in parliament

liament without these sugar-plums to give away. The church indeed furnishes plenty of them, but still they are all engaged, and the hungry mouths seem to multiply faster than the douceurs can be supplied. I wish Mr. Bayes well, and, if he publishes by subscription, he may set my name down for a copy; any thing more at present it is out of my power to do for him."

Thus the writer who has more ability, and who has perhaps been more industrious than many in a lucrative or high political employment, is considered in the light of a mendicant, and even then dismissed to his cell to mourn over the ingratitude and venality of the world.

To seek learning and virtue is one thing, and to seek preferment and patronage another. The pursuits are often incompatible; and let not him repine at the want of patronage and preferment who has been in his study and among his books, when he should have been, consistently with the pursuit of patronage and preferment, at a levee, or busy in *electioneering*. If he wrote successfully in politics, or if he managed a newspaper full of falsehood and virulent calumny, he might get something, when his party should prevail in the grand contest for power and profit. But poetry, history, science, morality, and divinity,

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make no votes, and add no strength to party; are every body's business, and for that reason, according to a vulgar remark, the care of nobody.

If he had employed his time in engrossing deeds as an attorney, or in posting his books as a merchant or banker, or in driving the quill in the East Indies, he might, if good fortune had attended him, have been by this time a Member of Parliament by purchase, and then, by voting for a number of years for himself, and talking two or three hours plausibly on the right side for his own interest, have sat down at last on a wool-sack with a coronet on his head. As a writer on literature only, he would still have continued in his garret, though the whole nation should have been improved and entertained by his labours, and future generations may receive equal pleasure and advantage from them.

The lucre of literary works falls chiefly to the lot of the venders of them; and the most eminent writers, who had nothing but what their works brought them, would be likely to starve. There are instances, indeed, of literary drudges, who, undertaking mere compilations and low works of little ingenuity and invention, have gained a livelihood; but a man of genius can never stoop to such employment, unless through
mere

mere necessity; and then being in a state of servitude, and unable to chuse his own subjects, and the manner of treating them, all his spirit evaporates, all his fire is damped, and he becomes a mere hireling, seeking gain and disregarding reputation.

Publishing by subscription is, in the present state of things, a species of beggary. A man of that independent spirit which marks great abilities, had rather engage himself in a handicraft employment than solicit the subscriptions of those who pretend to despise his book, however valuable, because it has solicited their reluctant contribution. Poverty, and a starving family, may urge a man to ask subscriptions in this age, for it is certainly rather less ignominious than housebreaking, and attended with much less hazard to the person. But would not the same time, and the same ability, the same industry exerted in a counting house, or in a shop, have obtained a better reward, with less contumely? All I contend to establish is, that they who study *letters*, as mere *literati*, without a profession, will usually derive from them little to gratify their avarice or ambition. Sir William Jones's doctrine and conduct in relinquishing a life of letters for a life of business, are founded on actual observation of the living world, and the state of things in the present age.

Many contend that there should be certain public rewards appropriated by government to literary merit. I fear they would be bestowed by interest and party on moderate, or on no merit; like some of the professorships in the universities; like the Gresham professorships in London; like doctors degrees; like many sinecures, for which the qualification consists solely in the ability to procure them.

Who is to be the judge and awarder of the prize? Contemporaries often behold living merit through the false medium either of envy or national prejudice. If a writer were rewarded by one party, another would from that moment exert itself to depreciate his character, his abilities, and his works; so that a man of real modesty and merit, who valued his fame or his peace, would often wish to decline the emolument, which would then fall to some bold and empty pretender. How much envy and detraction have been occasioned by the pensions, bestowed upon a few in the present reign? A man who gains an income equal to the best of them, in a low trade, thanks nobody but God, and his own industry for it; but the pensioned, or patronized author, has an everlasting debt of gratitude to pay, is frequently doomed to unmanly submission, and surrounded by enviers who leave nothing
unattempted

unattempted to lessen his happiness, and lower his fame.

Then welcome a competent mediocrity with liberty and peace. Let the man of genius love his muse, and his muse shall reward him with sweet sensations; with pictures and images of beautiful nature, and with a noble generosity of spirit, which can look down with pity, contempt, or total indifference, on patrons who have often as little sense to understand, as they have liberality to reward him.

Milton was poor and unpatronized, and so was Shakespeare. A miserable pittance bought that poem which is one of the first honours, not only of this nation, but of human nature. But is it not credible, that Milton and Shakespeare had internal delights, a luxury of soul, unknown to the dull tribe who are often rewarded with pensions, prebends, canonries, bishoprics, and which many patrons, with all their pomp and power, would envy, if they were capable of conceiving the exquisite pleasure.

Let the republic of letters be ever free; and let no bribery and corruption prevail in it. Where patronage interferes, independence is too often destroyed. I except the noble
instance

instance of Mr. Dyson's patronage of the poet Akenfide.

Writing, it may be said, made Addison a minister of state. It raised Prior to public employment from abject obscurity. Burnet, Somers, Locke, Davenant, Steel, and others in former days, owed their wealth and elevation to their pen. Their success occasioned such numerous competitors that they injured each other. The public was often glutted. Patriots or ministers found other ways to effect their purposes than persuasion and argument, invective or panegyric. The prevalence of corruption, rendered the assistance of argument less necessary; but still politics are the best field for writers who mean only to serve their interest, and to improve their worldly condition.

But no kind of writing in the present age is peculiarly fit for making a fortune. Auctioneers, dancing-masters, quack doctors, balloonists, actresses, opera dancers, Equestrian performers, perfumers, these are they whom the British nation honours with fame, or rewards with affluence.

With respect indeed to employing abilities on general subjects of morals and literature, in which

no particular party or sect is interested, one must say, with an ingenious writer,

“Whoever is resolved to employ his hours
“and his labour in this manner, should consider
“himself as one who lays out his fortune in mend-
“ing *the high ways*. MANY ARE BENEFITED,
“AND FEW ARE OBLIGED. If he escapes
“obloquy, it is very well.

“Triumpho, si licet, latere tecto, abscedere.”

And yet such labours alone usually descend to posterity, and such chiefly produce permanent advantage to the public. Who regards the petty controversies of little sectaries, or even the violent struggles of public statesmen and politicians, after the lapse of half a century?

Happy are they who, free from sordid motives,

——— Virtutem amplectuntur ipsam
Præmia si tollas.——

They will not be without their reward in the final result of things; and, indeed, their internal satisfaction is more than a recompence for the want of secular emolument and honour.

“Man wants but little, nor that little long.”

C H A P. VIII.

*Of Mottoes, Quotations, Marginal Notes, &c.—
Apologies for them—If not always useful, yet
commonly ornamental—If troublesome or unin-
telligible, may be neglected.*

THE laborious writers of the last century presented most of their works to the public in bulky folios, with a small letter, a large page, a narrow margin, and a great abundance of notes and citations. It was the literary fashion of the time; but the fashion is so much altered, that though the margins are now usually large enough to admit a greater quantity in notes and quotations than the text itself amounts to, yet you may read works consisting of many volumes without stumbling on a single quotation, or finding the uniformity of the beautiful page violated by one marginal comment. Formerly, as you journeyed through a book, elucidations in the margin attended your progress like lamps by the road side; but now, it may be presumed, books shine like phosphorus, or the glow-worm, with an internal lustre, and require not the assistance of extrinsic illumination.

That

That I approve of quotations myself, is evident from my practice; though I have not been without sensible hints, that books would be more saleable without Latin and Greek; the very sight of which is apt, I am told, to disgust those who have forgotten the attainments of the grammar school. I cannot help it. If a passage which I have read occurs to my mind while I am writing, down it goes; and I have the consolation, that if it displeases some, it may possibly please others. Of this I am secure: it has pleased myself; and I have honestly confessed, that my own amusement forms a very considerable part of my motives both to write and transcribe.

But seriously, there appear to be some just objections to the fashion which crowded the page with passages from various authors, and interrupted the context by references continually occurring.

The reader, it may be said, either attends to them, or he does not; if he attends to them, not perhaps being able to attend sufficiently to two things at once, he neglects the context for a time, or, at least, loses that ardour which he might have contracted in continual reading, and which probably would have contributed more to
his

his conviction than any side lights derived from the commentary. If he does not attend to them, in consequence of his opinion that they may be an impediment to his purpose, they might, so far as he is concerned, have been omitted, and the book would have been a less evil by being of less magnitude.

They are often in languages unknown to the English reader, and these conduce to no other purpose but to offend and to mortify him. I have no doubt but that many English books have been injured in their sale and circulation by the notes with which they abounded. Many persons of good sense, and well informed understanding, do not chuse to be reminded, on every page, of their ignorance of antient languages, and are a little afraid of being asked by their children or others, the meaning of passages which they cannot explain.

Notes are often inserted ostentatiously and improperly. The authors seem to be more anxious in the display of their own attainments than in convincing or entertaining their readers. A few Greek words, and a little Hebrew, conduce very much to raise the admiration of the ignorant or half learned, who know not with what ease quotations are made by means of Indexes, Dictionaries,

Dictionaries, *Florilegia*, *Spicilegia*, *Eclogæ*, and Synopses.

It is, I believe, by no means uncandid to suppose, that quotations have been thus easily and craftily multiplied to swell a volume to a marketable size, and to encrease the price. The artifice in this case deserves the indignation of the reader, as it resembles the fraud of the huckster, who, in vending his fruit, makes use of a measure half filled with foreign matter, or with a false bottom placed in the middle. If the context of such writers may be compared to the kernel of the nut, the notes and quotations may be said to resemble the husk, yet, by a preposterous disproportion, the husk often contains a much greater quantity than the kernel. Who can wonder if the disgusted reader, in a case like this, throws away both kernel and shell?

But though something may be said against notes, quotations, and mottoes; yet more, I believe, may be advanced in their favour. If a reader thinks them of little use, or does not understand them, it is easy to neglect them. It is true that they occupy a space on the page, and increase the size of the volume; but these are inconveniencies of little consequence, compared

pared with the pleasure and information which they afford to scholars and attentive readers.

A reader is often referred in the margin to another author who has treated the same subject better or more fully, or in a different style, so as to afford additional information or new amusement.

If the passage be transcribed and inserted in the volume before him, the reader is able to consider it without the trouble of recurring to his library; a pleasant circumstance, which saves both time and trouble, and, I should think, could not fail of being agreeable to the indolent student of modern times, who only reads on his sofa over his chocolate, or as he lolls in his chariot, or sits under the hair-dresser.

It often happens that the quotations constitute the most valuable part of a book, and the reader may rejoice in such a case, that he has not spent his money and time in vain; which, peradventure, he might have done, had the author inserted nothing but the production of his own brain.

Though quotations and mottoes may be very easily selected and multiplied by means of indexes

dexes and dictionaries ; yet there is reason to conclude, that a writer who applies them *properly*, must have read, or be capable of reading, the authors from whom they are borrowed ; and, in these times of universal authorship, it is some comfort to a reader to know that his author is a little acquainted with antient learning, and able to drink at the fountains of philosophy. Ignorance may sometimes wear the mask of learning, but not constantly. A shrewd observer will discover it from the awkwardness of the wearer.

The more numerous the ideas which a volume furnishes, the more valuable it is to be considered ; as that garden or orchard is the best which abounds in the greatest plenty and variety of fruits and flowers. Some of the fruits and flowers are exotic ; but if the flowers are beautiful, sweet-scented, and curious, and the fruit rich and high flavoured, who can complain but the peevish and discontented ? You entered the garden in expectation of the common productions of this climate, and you are agreeably surprized with the magnolia and the pine-apple.

The art of cookery has often been used to illustrate the art of criticism ; and though many may prefer a plain cake, and say, *Pane egeo, jam Pon-*

Pontificum potiore placentis, yet the majority will approve a rich one, heightened and improved with ingredients not necessary to constitute the substance of a cake, because, as the logicians say, they *might be present or absent without the loss of the subject*, (*adesse aut abesse sine subjecti interitu*;) but yet, who could with justice blame the cook for adding plums and sweetmeats? Many have not a taste for such sweet things, it may be said; but while the majority have a relish for them, and while it is natural, the cook must remain without censure. Let those who like it not, refuse it; but let them not condemn the composition.

While mottoes and quotations are added with judgment, and in a limited length and number, they must be considered as valuable additions or pleasant ornaments; neither would I censure an author for inserting in his works curious and valuable passages which he has met with in his reading, any more than the traveller who adorns his house, his stair-case or parlour, with the productions which he has collected in his voyages; they might indeed be spared; they are not necessary, like the bed, the chairs, and the tables, but, like paintings, they are ornamental and amusing to the fancy, instructive to the understanding, and, in some measure, prove the traveller's authenticity.

But

But while I approve of judicious mottoes and quotations, I must join in reprobating artful and pedantic writers, who crowd their pages with Greek and Latin merely to exalt themselves in the eyes of the ignorant, and to gratify their vanity. The affectation and crafty accumulation of second-hand sentences on one side, is no less contemptible than the superficial pride of many French authors on the other, who call themselves philosophers, and who scorn to light their tapers at the torches of the antients; who therefore write volumes without a single Latin or Greek word, confidently relying on the solidity and copiousness of their own doctrines: Heroick souls in their own estimation! But others, with a detracting voice, will whisper, that the true reason of their totally declining to quote Greek and Latin is, that they understand only their mother tongue.

Quotations have been often misapplied by sceptical and infidel writers for the most dishonourable purposes, to give weight and authority to falshood in the attack of the national religion. A late historian, who has spoiled his book by an unfair attack on Christianity, has been found guilty, by several ingenious answerers, of misquoting, misrepresenting, and mistranslating passages from antient authors, whom he endeavoured

deavoured to compel into his service as auxiliaries. But nothing is to be wondered at in one who admires *Nero* for generosity and humanity.

Quotations can then only be objected to with reason when they exceed in length and number, when they mislead the reader by misapplication, when they are neither illustrative nor ornamental, but inserted solely from the motive of pedantic ostentation, or some other sinister inducement. Objections to them arising from idleness, ignorance, or caprice, deserve no notice. They are justified by reason, and by the example of the greatest authors.

The English reader is usually desirous to see Latin and Greek quotations translated. They disappoint him; because much of their beauty and force arises from the original language. Queen Caroline commanded Dr. John Clarke to translate the numerous and fine quotations in Wollaston's Religion of Nature; he obeyed the Queen, and the quotations were murdered by royal authority.

C H A P. IX.

*Character of Salmasius,—King Charles's apologist,
and Milton's antagonist. — "Audi alteram
partem."*

CLAUDE de Saumaïse, the great antagonist of Milton, or Claudius Salmasius, as he is called in his latinized name, was born at Dijon in France, in the year 1596. He was one among the numerous instances of early genius and proficiency. When he was scarcely fourteen, he was the editor of a book on the primacy of the Pope; and in the succeeding year, published *Florus*, with notes, dedicated to *Johannes Gruter*.

His principal works at a maturer age were: *Commentarii in Augustam Historiam*, *Exercitationes Plinianæ in Solinum*; *Apparatus sacer*; *Tractatus de Annis climactericis*; *Libri de Usuris, modo Usurarum et Fœnore Trapezitico*; *Defensio Regia pro Carolo primo, et Liber de Transubstantiatione, &c.*

He was held in high esteem by his contemporaries. The Venetians offered him a very considerable pecuniary reward, if he would consent to read three annual lectures in public. He

F

refused

refused the offer, from motives of diffidence and modesty. The Dutch judged him worthy to succeed the great Scaliger. As a divine, a lawyer, a physician, a philosopher, and philologist, he maintained a distinguished place in the opinions of those of his age, who were best enabled to form a judgment. He died in the year 1652, not without leaving an opinion in the minds of many, that his life had been shortened by poison. After his death, his manuscripts were burned by his wife, in pursuance of his own request.

His learning was profound and extensive. To his knowledge of the learned and European languages, he added that of the Arabic, Coptic, Persian, and Chinese. He was sometimes called the walking library, and the miracle of his age. The most celebrated scholars of his own time, and of that which succeeded it, speak in high terms of his learning. The great Grotius says of him, "That he had rather pass over in silence the consummate learning of Claudius Salmasius, than lower his praises through the defect of his own genius." Vossius, Joseph Scaliger, and Isaac Casaubon, competent judges, are warm in the praise of Claudius Salmasius.

Such is the writer whom Milton has reviled in the most contemptuous terms, as a reptile beneath

beneath contempt, in his Defence of the People of England. He who should derive his ideas of Salmasius from Milton's book, would consider him as a mere pretender to learning, a petty grammarian, and a character unworthy, not only of esteem, but even of notice.

Of his character indeed, it is affirmed that he was irritable and resentful; that he had the pride of learning, and the confidence of conscious superiority. Those who felt the weight of his merit, who were scorched by his lustre, or who dissented from him in religious and political principles, did not hesitate to load him with censure. But none of his enemies proceeded to such extremities as the great ornament of English poetry, John Milton.

The truth is, that our ardent champion for the rights of mankind was exasperated beyond measure, by Salmasius's book in defence of King Charles, which could not but reflect severely on the party which had brought that unfortunate monarch to the scaffold. But his confutation of that work would have carried with it more weight, if it had been more argumentative and moderate. It was the sudden effusion of a violent party-spirit; and proceeded less from judgment than from downright anger.

The *Defensio Regia* is acknowledged, even by the friends to the cause, to be unequal to the expectations formed of the author. It is confused and prolix. Salmasius's idea of a *King*, seems to be that of a *despotic potentate*. He considered not duly the different degrees of kingly power. He had no right idea of a limited monarchy. But an author, by no means partial to Salmasius, cannot help expressing himself thus unfavourably of Milton's answer, or *Defensio pro populo Anglicano*: "Excepit eum mordax scriptor Miltonus, sed in quo desideres prudentiam et equitatem judicii; in sarcasmo est artifex, unde petulans ejus ingenium satis se prodidit."

Herman. Conring. de Regn. Ang.

Salmasius was one of those writers who seem more ambitious of becoming voluminous, than of writing a few works of finished excellence. He wrote with great haste, but he was qualified to do so, as his memory was richly furnished. The materials, though hastily produced, were generally of intrinsic value; and he did not often give himself the trouble to transcribe his composition, but sent it to the press as it teemed from his prolific mind and memory.

He has confessedly more learning than original invention. As a work of great erudition,

I admire

I admire the *Plinianæ Exercitationes in Solinum*. Solinus himself is an author of little value. His work is entitled *Polyhistor*, and dedicated or addressed to *Adventus*. It is chiefly geographical, and, like our modern geographical grammars, gives something of the history and relates the curiosities of the countries which it describes. Solinus's work fills not more than sixty-three folio pages; but Salmasius's *Exercitationes* upon it, take up near a thousand, printed closely in columns. Salmasius did not esteem Solinus's book, though he made use of it as a subject on which to write almost as many annotations as crowd the pages of two large folios. Salmasius calls Solinus *mirum nugatorem; merum miscellionem; omnia turbantem et confundentem finium* *. Scaliger characterises him as a most futile author. It is certain that he often quotes the words of Pliny, and applies them in a different meaning from that in which they were intended. Salmasius knew the defects of Solinus, and therefore his choice of his work for the purpose of a comment, is no disgrace to the annotator.

* “ *Plinium emendare, explicare, et castigare,*
 “ *his Exercitationibus proposui, sed eo ordine*
 “ *quo compilavit eum Solinus; quem et ipsum*
 “ *eâdem quoque operâ non solum meliorem facere,*
 “ *verum etiam quam malus sit auctor, ostendere,*
 “ *pars est instituti nostri.*”

Salmasius, *Exercit. ad 1 Epist.*

The Exercitationes are justly held in high esteem. They furnish a great variety and quantity of information; and Hugo Grotius calls them, *imensæ frugis opus*.

In justice to a very respectable author, I have mentioned these circumstances concerning his character, and the estimation in which he was held by the learned of his own age. Milton's severity of censure has rendered him an object of hatred and contempt in our country: But now, at last, when the rage of party-fury is no more, justice must hold the balance, and in weighing the merits of Milton and Salmasius, must allot to Milton the praise of uncommon genius and learning united; and to Salmasius, not indeed the praise of Milton's genius, but of learning, equal to Milton's, if not superior.

I insert the following impartial account of Salmasius from a Lexicographer.

“ Claudius Salmasius, criticus doctissimus,
 “ jurisconsultus et orator insignis, filius Benigni,
 “ senatoris parlamenti Divionensis, ex matre
 “ puriorem religionem hausit cum lacte; stu-
 “ diis dein admotus, tam stupendos in iis fecit
 “ progressus, ut vix decennis Græca Latinaque
 “ carmina feliciter conderet. Exin Parisiis,
 “ Heidelbergæ,

“ Heidelbergæ, alibique versatus, Burdegalam
 “ se recepit, uxore ibi ductâ. In academiam
 “ Oxoniensem et Parisiensem, amplissimis præ-
 “ miis invitatus, ut et alia in loca, Hollandiam
 “ prætulit, et academiam Lugdunensem per
 “ annos aliquammultos illustravit. Inde tamen a
 “ Sueciæ Reginâ Holmiam se pellici passus, ibi
 “ æstatem integram transegit. In Belgium
 “ postea redux, cum uxorem ad Spadanas aquas
 “ comitaretur; obiit A. C. 1652; operibus
 “ egregiis famam adeptus immortalem.”

The following parallel between Grotius and Salmasius was drawn by D'Argonne.

“ Salmasius had a lively genius and a prodigious memory. All his books are extemporary. But he did not digest the subjects which he treated. Whatever he gave the public, he gave with disdain, and as if he was in a passion. He seemed to throw his Greek, his Latin, and all his knowledge, at people's heads.

“ Grotius, on the contrary, considered every thing, digested every thing, and arranged it judiciously. He pays respect to his reader. His erudition is like a great river, which diffuses itself far and wide, and does good to all

“ the world. Every work of Grotius is a masterpiece in its kind ; a thing unexampled among the antients and moderns. Never did an author make a better choice of subjects. He grows great with them, and they grow great under his pen. *Crescit cum amplitudine rerum vis ingenii.*”

There was something in the temper and manners of Salmasius which made him enemies ; yet the most illustrious critics, as I have already hinted, are warm in his praise. Vossius calls him, “ Virum nunquam satis laudatum, ingens literarum columen.” Casaubon says of him, “ Est profecto dignissimus quem omnes boni ament.” Grotius characterizes his learning with the epithet *consummatissimam*. It was the poet of Paradise Lost who addressed him by the names of fool, blockhead, and rogue. Such is the virulence of party rage !

C H A P. X.

On the motives of moral writers.—Unreasonable to expect a total disregard to fame.—Professions of philanthropy, entirely exclusive of self-love, little to be believed.

REAL diamonds and gold are rare, hidden under the earth, or in the beds of rivers; but perhaps truth, as it is more valuable than diamonds and gold, is also more difficult to be found in a state of perfect and un sullied purity. A man scarcely knows the truth of his own mind, his own avowed and professed sentiments; so just is the remark of the Scriptures, THAT THE HEART IS DECEITFUL ABOVE ALL THINGS, WHO CAN KNOW IT?

Writers, like their fellow-mortals, being frail and imperfect, are very apt to deceive themselves and their readers, in representing the motives which impel them both to compose and to publish their Lucubrations.

If you think it worth while to inspect Prefaces and Dedications, you will find many authors declare, that their chief motive is a desire to inform the understandings, or to correct the morals of the world, regardless of themselves,

whether fame or obscurity is to be their final portion. They are contented to withdraw themselves so long as the public receive advantage. While the cause of truth is served, or science increased, their end is fully answered.

If man were a more perfect being than he is found to be in his most informed and improved state beneath the moon, we might believe that writers, who recommend liberality and public spirit with much strength of argument, were themselves possessed of those qualities in a degree which taught them to forget themselves, as they sometimes profess, in their zeal to promote the welfare of the public; but few men are so elevated as to be divested of self-love. One writer may renounce money; but then perhaps he is impelled by fame: another may renounce fame; but then he is actuated by the love of lucre. If a few have written merely to inform and amend their fellow-creatures, they must have been such as were remarkably elevated and enlightened by the pure principles of Christianity. Heathen philosophy and human learning produce not such moral heroism.

But what shall we say of those public-spirited writers who compose and publish with the liberal view of delivering us all from superstition, or of

disabusing

disabusing us of Christianity. They pretend to an uncommon share of benevolence, they are outrageously philanthropic, and, if their prefaces are to be believed, they mean only to deliver their fellow-creatures from the manacles of prejudice. But from the style of dictation which they assume, and the displeasure they express on being convicted of error and fallacy, there is reason to believe that they are under the influence of pride and selfishness; of that peculiar selfishness which leads them, for the sake of gratifying their vanity, and of obtaining distinction among those of whom they affect a contempt, to hazard the disturbance of the repose, and even the destruction of the human race.

There are doubtless many men who certainly discharge the duties of life, in the civil and domestic circles, from a virtuous principle; and very often sacrifice both their ease and their pecuniary interest to the performance of them; but what man shall say that it is his indispensable duty to write, and to print his writings, for the improvement of the public? Who gave him this commission? A man may have an inclination to write his thoughts, and he may also be impelled by the fine feelings of his genius; but will any man who *publishes*, declare that, in doing so, he has no other motive or stimulus whatever but the

good of mankind? If he is a good man, he must wish that his productions may do good; and the hope that they will do good may have weight in prevailing on him to offer them to the public notice; but I believe there is commonly a mixture of vanity even in this laudable motive; and that, if he examines his heart, he will find in it a desire of distinction as a man of letters, and a love of literary fame. He wishes, *se tollere humo*, to raise himself while he serves others: *Digito monstrari et dicier hic est.*

And allowing this to be so, where is the shame or culpability? And, since there is no evil in being impelled to good and useful actions partly by the love of fame, why should authors studiously disavow that motive, and hypocritically declare, that they are impelled by no other principle than the desire of benefiting their fellow-creatures? Such pretensions are the mere cant of authorship; a flimsy covering, intended to conceal that which is no disgrace, since it is found to be the attendant of the most improved state of human nature.

I know of few better men and better writers than Cicero. But Cicero felt, and avowed a love of fame; and has left it on record, as his opinion, that the best and noblest natures are the

most

most powerfully actuated by the prospect of glory.

He who is sincerely influenced in publishing his sentiments by the love of God and man, without any commixture of pride and vanity, is, I must acknowledge, a much greater man than Cicero; and, if any thing can give him this elevation, I repeat, that it must be THE RELIGION OF JESUS CHRIST. A man who is deeply impressed with a sense of his duty as a *Christian*, may be led to believe, and may, in consequence of his belief, shew, by his actions, that all his *talents* are to be used in the immediate service of him who gave them, in returning him praise, and in diffusing happiness among his creatures to the best of his abilities. But our gold has always a great mixture of alloy; and he who ostentatiously pretends, that the ore in his composition is perfectly pure, is in danger of being considered as an impostor. The very pretension to so much purity is itself a particle of dross, and a proof of a base mixture.

Let not the author, on one hand, assume the appearance of unattainable excellence; and let not the reader, on the other, expect or demand it. In the present infirmity of human nature, it is sufficient that good is intended and
pro-

produced; though the motive is not entirely free from vanity or self interest. But I think it would be prudent if authors would cease to declare, that their publications are entirely the effect of a regard for mankind, without any wish for distinction or reward. Such a profession, as it is not rendered probable by uniform experience of human nature in its most perfect state, conduces to diminish the credit of the author, instead of advancing it, and therefore causes his book to have less influence on those whom it was intended to benefit. It favours of empiricism. The discerning part of mankind always expect and make allowance for some degree of self-love in every act of social beneficence.

Many people are indeed inclined to expect from authors, that perfection which they see recommended in their books, and are disgusted and disappointed at beholding in them the common frailties and infirmities of human nature*. But if you expect the moralist to be as good as the morals he describes or recommends in his writings, then expect your physician to be always in health.

* *Quotusquis-que philosophorum invenitur qui disciplinam non ostentationem sua scientia, sed legem vite putet?*

CIC.

BOOK THE SECOND.

CHAP. I.

The supernatural influence of the Deity on the mind of man.—Unreasonable and unphilosophical to disbelieve it.

AS the Winter Evenings approach towards Christmas, I shall sometimes devote my Lucubrations to subjects of more importance to every one of us, than all the literature and philosophy which the world ever admired.

Τίς ἡ τῆς κινήσεως ἀρχὴ ἐν τῇ Ψυχῇ; Δῆλον δὲ ὥσπερ ἐν τῷ ὅλῳ, ΘΕΟΣ καὶ πᾶν ἐκείνω. κινεῖ γὰρ πῶς πάντα ΤΟ ΕΝ ἩΜΙΝ ΘΕΙΟΝ. λόγῳ δ' ἀρχὴ οὐ λόγος, ἀλλὰ τι κρεῖττον. τί οὖν αὖ κρεῖττον καὶ ἐπισήμης πλὴν Θεός; *What is the beginning of motion in the soul? It is evident that it is, as in the universe, God himself; and all in Him. For it is the same NUMEN in us, that moves all things in some sort or other; and the beginning of reason is not reason, but something which is better: but what can be better than science, but God?**

* Translated by Dr. Henry More.

The

The passage from Aristotle which I have here quoted is very remarkable, and well worth the attention of every student in divinity. Scalliger, on reading it, could not repress the warm sentiments which it excited, but burst into the following exclamation.

QUID AIS, DIVINE VIR? ESTNE IN NOBIS ALIQUID DIVINUM QUOD SIT PRÆSTANTIUS IPSA RATIONE? AN TIBI QUOQUE NOTI FUERUNT IPSI RADII SPIRITUS SANCTI? *What sayest thou, O thou divine Philosopher? Is there any thing within us of a celestial nature, and more excellent than reason? Were then the irradiations of the Holy Ghost known to thee?*

TO EN HMIN OEION. The divinity within us! An idea which approaches very nearly to the sublime doctrines of the Christian religion, respecting the existence and operation of the third person in the Holy Trinity:

Est Deus in nobis agitante calescimus illo.

There is, indeed, every reason to believe, that God Almighty vouchsafed to bestow a considerable degree of religious illumination on the minds of the wiser Heathens. The soul of man, whether Heathen or Christian, purified and exalted by knowledge,

knowledge, virtue, and benevolence, could not but be a beloved object to the Father of all Truth, Goodness, and Mercy. God saw that it was good, comparatively good, and, as the emanation of his love, indulged it with the view of celestial truths *. But this revelation was but partial and confined, till, in the wonderful dispensations of Divine Wisdom, it seemed good to God to send HIM who brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

How does the doctrine taught us by this heavenly instructor elevate and aggrandize hu-

* Thus the Platonists, by tradition or illumination, had acquired an idea of the Trinity, 1st, το ον, τ' αγαθον, — 2d, Νοος or Λογος, — who was also the Δημιουργος, — 3d, Ψυχη: — that is, 1st, the One absolutely good. — 2d, The Mind or Word, the Maker. — 3d, Ψυχη, the Soul or Spirit.

Seneca's words are remarkable: " Quisquis formator universi fuit, five ille DEUS est potens " omnium, five incorporealis RATIO, ingentium " operum artifex, five divinus SPIRITUS, per omnia, maxima, minima, aequali intentione diffusus." Whoever was the former of the universe, whether God Almighty, whether incorporeal *Reason*, whether the divine *Spirit*, diffused equally through all things, the greatest and the least, he adds, " five " *Fatum*." See Jortin's Discourses on the Christian Religion.

manity!

manity! A particle of the Divinity we learn condescends to unite itself most intimately with our spiritual essence; and not only so, but our very bodies are rendered the temples of the divine Person. These poor frail habitations of the soul are not thought unworthy of being made the mansions of one Person in the Godhead. Myste-rious, yet comfortable and animating truth! And let us never incur the danger of losing the association of this Sanctifier, Illuminator, and Comforter, by disbelieving, with presumptuous audacity, the reality of his existence, or doubting his actual operation on the minds of good men.

I know that nothing is more common than to attribute all the operations of the holy spirit to imagination and enthusiasm; and that they who at any time have made pretensions to any species or degree of influence of this supernatural kind, have been treated, by wicked and worldly men, as well as by proud philosophers, with contempt and resentment, as fanatical impostors, or foolish devotees. He who undertakes to maintain the reality of it, is considered by the vain and superficial pretenders to singular wisdom, as little different from a fool or a hypocrite. I fear that persons thus disposed to ridicule all idea of supernatural influence on the mind of man

by

by the operation of the Holy Ghost, are in a deplorable condition. They seem to be among those whose hearts are rendered insensible, and whose eyes are darkened, because they have perversely and presumptuously refused to receive the truth as it is in Jesus, with due faith and humility.

It is by no means inconsistent with the sublimest philosophy, independently of religion, to believe that the Supreme Being is able to act on the human mind by an invisible and supernatural influence. The most celebrated philosophers of antiquity have given reason to believe, that they thought there was a very intimate connection between the soul of man and the essence of the Divinity: nor did it appear in the least contradictory to nature and possibility, that he who made both the soul and body in a most wonderful manner, should be able to act upon them *secretly*, yet *powerfully*, and in a manner scarcely less wonderful than their original creation.

I must confess I cannot help considering the doctrine of the Holy Ghost, and its operation on the human mind, as at once the sublimest and most comfortable doctrine of the gospel.

How

How little happiness and perfection can I reach by my own poor efforts. I struggle, but am defeated; I climb, but I fall. All is weakness, all is misery. But evil is not without a remedy. God Almighty has promised to strengthen my weakness and comfort my sorrow, by actually participating in my nature, if I endeavour to render myself not unworthy of the merciful condescension.

The Scripture expresses the entrance of the Holy Ghost into the heart of man in strong and lively language. We are born again. We become new creatures. Glorious advancement to felicity and perfection. Here is scope for ambition. By this union we become truly ennobled. How fordid, how mean, how base do the distinctions on which men pride themselves appear, on the comparison! The true Christian, whom God has blessed with the influence of his holy spirit, is the only character which deserves the appellation of great. All other pretensions to greatness appear childish and ridiculous. The PALINGENESIA alone can aggrandize fallen man.

Professed wits and professed philosophers, both of the *minute* species, will treat this subject with ridicule. They are ready to denominate whatever

well

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is advanced on the subject of supernatural influence, the mere rant of enthusiasm. Abuse, however, proves nothing but the levity or anger of him who has recourse to it. Let it be remembered by him who feels himself disposed to deride the doctrine of supernatural influence on the human mind, that it is not merely the doctrine of any mortal, but of the holy scriptures; and that its truth has been confirmed by the actual experience of many good and pious men, whose reason was in too great a degree of perfection to be easily deceived, and whose hearts would not permit them to deceive others. Is it more difficult to believe that the Spirit of God can operate on the human soul, than that a piece of stone or iron, where there is no influence or effluence *visible* or tangible, should be able to attract a needle?

CHAP. II.

*Affectation of the character and conversation of
a Wit or Humourist,*

SWIFT, whose knowledge of human nature was accurate and extensive, observes, that there is no ambition more general than that of being reputed a Wit; and, at the same time, that a very small part of mankind can make just pretensions to the character.

All human race would fain be wits,
But thousands miss for one that hits.

Whoever has conversed much in the world will have had opportunities of observing the pretender to wit without the reality. Instead of diffusing mirth and pleasure, which is the natural effect of true wit, the pretender to it disturbs and wearies men of sense, and extorts a laugh of approbation from none but the weak and the extremely complaisant.

The Buffoon is one of the commonest characters among the affected Wits. The tricks which he condescends to practise have usually
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more of oddity than humour. He may serve to create a laugh in a large and mixed company, or to come in with the fool and the dwarf after dinner : but, in the society of those who assemble for the pleasure of conversation, he is the disturber of all decorum, and the confounder of all reason. He is borne with from a respect to his person, or from mere good nature ; but there is scarcely a more pitiable object, than that of a man who is exerting every effort to attract the admiration of his company, and, after all, is received with coolness, or attended to with a constrained civility.

The character of the Punster is by no means so common in the present age as it was about half a century ago ; but it is not extinct. Many writers, particularly the Spectator, have expressed themselves very warmly against the poor punsters. I cannot consider them of consequence enough to excite indignation. They are a harmless race. They mean no injury ; and, if they can cause a laugh, they think their endeavours amply rewarded. While they attend to time and place, there surely can be no harm in them ; but, on the contrary, there must be much good in promoting mirth and good humour. The great danger is, lest they totally forget the proprieties of time and place ; for the applause bestowed

bestowed upon them for one good pun well applied, is a temptation to be always endeavouring to shine in the same excellence. The consequence is not only the interruption of rational and serious conversation, but the introduction of a number of bad puns, which, instead of pleasing, fatigue the hearer, and, instead of producing applause, cause a supreme, though possibly, a secret contempt.

He, indeed, who either knows not, or, if he knows, neglects the propriety of time and place, can never appear to advantage in company, or contribute to rational amusement. The affected buffoon is seldom either estimable or agreeable; though it is evident that he is desirous of pleasing by the pains he takes to exert his abilities, and by the disappointment which his looks express when his efforts fail of producing their effect. The truth is, that he cannot support a serious character, but obtrudes his oddities on those whose minds are engaged in private business of consequence to themselves or families, and who are unwilling to be interrupted by levity and impertinence. If the buffoon would reserve his exhibitions for the seasons appropriated to recreation, his attempts to please would entitle him to the thanks instead of the contempt of his associates. As he is usually good-natured, and

free from all bad designs, I cannot think he deserves that severity of censure with which the proud and sullen sometimes treat him. He who undertakes to divert others by buffoonery, descends greatly, and lays himself at the mercy of his company. Let him receive the applause of good-natured complaisance, which he will think an ample compensation for his voluntary sacrifice.

The tribe of affected wits is too numerous, and too various to admit of a specific enumeration. My paper would become a volume if I were to enter into a particular description of the Mimic, the Droll, the Jester, the Story-teller, the Practical Joker, and the many other characters which are wholly employed in displaying such qualities as contribute to excite laughter. It will be sufficient for my present purpose to conclude with a few general observations.

It is very certain that true wit and true humour, I mean such as are produced with ease and success on every proper occasion, are truly estimable. They are brilliant jewels, which sparkle to the eye, and, at the same time, are of solid and intrinsic value. I censure only the affectation of wit and humour, that constant endeavour to shine by smart sayings and odd doings, which proceeds from vanity alone unsupported

ported by genius, and fatigues and importunes, instead of delighting the company whose notice and praise it solicits.

The persons who are guilty of this folly derive it from having heard the applause bestowed on some man of real wit and humour, and from a desire of enjoying a similar admiration. It would be happy if they could divest themselves of a foolish ambition, which renders them disagreeable and ridiculous; and if they could learn to seek esteem rather than admiration, and to found their pretensions to it, not on jesting and buffoonery, but on good sense and common propriety.

Know thyself, was a precept worthy of an oracle. They who are acquainted with their own abilities and characters, will seldom be exposed to contempt. It is an ignorance of themselves that leads men to affect wit when nature has given only a common capacity; for surely none would willingly expose themselves to the displeasure of all around them, if they foresaw that their attempts would be unattended with success through the deficiency of natural talents. They certainly do not discover their own defect. And how shall they learn it? By observing with care the effect which their attempts at wit produce

produce on the company. It may indeed sometimes happen that a good joke may be lost by the stupidity of the hearers; but he would pay himself too great a compliment who should conclude, that whenever his jokes have failed, the fault was not in himself, but in the audience. If what he says or does is received with coldness or impatience, and produces a derision of himself, and not a laugh at his joke, he may venture to suspect that he has mistaken his talent. If this happens often, he may do more than suspect; he may be certain. If he has any regard to his character, and wishes to possess the esteem and respect of those with whom he is conversant, he will immediately desist from buffoonery, mimicry, punning, story-telling, waggism, versifying, and spouting, and endeavour to fill his place in society respectably, by exercising the qualities of common sense, good-nature, civility, and politeness. These will always secure him from contempt. It is not in the power of every one to shine in company; but there is not a man in the world who may not render himself respectable, or at least tolerable, by modesty, humility, attention to others, by discretion in regulating his words and actions, by a due discrimination of propriety in time, place, and persons.

C H A P. III.

The affectation of learning in conversation. —

Esse quam videri recommended.

THERE are many persons who, though they have not enjoyed the advantages of a regular education, yet, having read the common books in the English language, make, on the slender stock of literature so acquired, an ostentatious display of extensive erudition. They are unwilling to take the trouble of severe and methodical study, but at the same time desire to be admired for their skill in letters.

It is entertaining to observe the artifices of persons who are influenced by this kind of vanity. They are very careful to know the character of their company; for if there is any one in it of acknowledged learning and real skill, they either sit silent, or give the conversation a turn to subjects not at all connected with letters. They talk of a fashionable player, or singer, a new invented dress, or the news and politics of the present moment. They speak loud, and in an over-bearing style, so that a modest and diffident man, whose animal spirits are not so strong as their own, is borne down by mere noise and vehemence. If an ingenious
observation

observation is made, they either treat it with ridicule, or receive it in contemptuous silence; and the modest man who made it, is distressed and ashamed of that which ought to redound to his honour.

But the sphere in which they chiefly exert themselves, is the company of persons of some rank and consequence, who have more wealth than wit, and more honours than good qualities. Here they are sure of being repaid for their exertions by good dinners, good wine, and noisy festivity. They enter the room with an air of great importance, take the elbow chair unasked, put their spectacles on, and, after looking round the room with the fullest assurance, deliver their opinions on the reigning topic with a tone of decision, and in a style of absolute authority. It is astonishing how a company, even of sensible persons, will submit to a bold pretender, who possesses a sufficient assurance to carry him through all obstacles. All listen. He feels the force of encouragement, and proceeds. He has laid in a store of hard, polysyllabic words, and these he utters most confidently, without knowing or caring whether or not he is right in their application. The company admiring that learning which they are conscious they do not possess, estimate the parts of the

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pretender

pretender at the highest rate. They celebrate him wherever they go. His character is thus raised, and if he is in the church, or indeed in either of the professions, he will be likely to obtain preferment and rewards from his loquacity. When the dispensers of rewards are not qualified to judge of merit, it is not possible but that they should be misled by bold pretenders, and give that which is due to solid worth, to him who only possesses a superficial smattering, with a prating tongue.

Those who love to command the admiration of the ignorant by pretending to learning, often avail themselves of an easy artifice. They learn the prevailing topic of conversation, and take care to read upon it just before they go into company. Dictionaries constitute their libraries. They have little else to do than to look out the subject of general conversation in the volumes of Ephraim Chambers.

If a comet appears, or a remarkable eclipse happens, they read the articles Comet and Eclipse in the Encyclopedia, just before they go into company, and are thus enabled to astonish the unsuspecting and the ignorant by the depth and accuracy of their knowledge. They have the address to introduce their remarks as if they
were

were unpremeditated; sometimes prefacing them with an affected apology for the defect of their memories; and at others, hinting that they formerly studied these things, but that they had not been able to look into a book on the subject since they can remember.

They are very fond of quotations, and though they understand neither Latin nor Greek, will yet contrive to learn of some school-boy half a dozen verses from Horace, Virgil, Homer, or the Anthologia; and take care to spout them in the company of those who cannot judge of the propriety of the application. They will repeat Homer's *Ton d'apomeibomenos* with vehemence, and shed tears expressive of their sensibility to the pathos of the sentiment and language. "Homer! Homer! they exclaim, read Homer in the original, and you need read no more. All other authors will appear contemptible on the comparison. He contains every thing; all arts and sciences, law, physic, and divinity." In the mean time, the pretender does not really know the letters of the Greek alphabet, and is no better acquainted with Homer in the original, than with the Polyglott.

Another common practice among those who feel the impulse of literary vanity, without possessing any real knowledge which can entitle

them to distinction, is that of learning a few tricks with an electrical machine; or collecting butterflies, moths, stones, or other physical curiosities. By the inspection of dictionaries they acquire the scientific names; and by calling a nettle, or a dandelion, or a pebble by some long latinized appellation, they assume the pride of profound learning, and are often complimented with the admiration of their ignorant associates.

They are particularly inclined to engage in religious subjects, and frequently endeavour to evince their learning and ingenuity by attacking the Bible, and the whole system of Revelation. It sometimes happens that persons of this character will produce objections to the Bible, though they have never read it. They inspect some of those conceited writers, who have endeavoured to raise themselves to notice by diffusing scepticism, and produce the contemptible cavils of such men as their own inventions. In the company of honest, sober, unsuspicious persons, who are unfurnished with learning and experience, they strike every one with wonder. They pass for prodigies of wit and wisdom by quoting Voltaire and Bolingbroke, and by naming some authors whom those excentric writers mention, but whom, perhaps, they never read; or read without a sufficient knowledge of the language to understand them completely.

This

This part of their conversation may be truly injurious, as it may communicate bad principles among the inconsiderate, and those who are already not very well-disposed; it ought therefore to subject them to contempt and abhorrence.

When their subjects are merely matters of human learning and curiosity, their arrogant pretensions are innocent with respect to others, and only expose themselves to the just ridicule of all who are enabled, by their solid sense and improvements, to see the futility of their conversation.

A desire to entertain the company in which we converse, and to procure their esteem by a modest display of our accomplishments, is by no means unreasonable, or reprehensible; but let it operate in leading us to be really what we wish to appear. Let solidity of merit be first secured, and it will shine, like a true diamond, with its own lustre.

C H A P. IV.

*The affectation of being miserable—False feelings—
Gloomy books disapproved—Chearfulness recom-
mended.*

THE vanity of man may justly be termed a Proteus. In the endeavour to obtain distinction, not only happiness, but misery is frequently affected.

I believe it is considered by many as honourable to possess a degree of that sensibility which is too delicate to bear the common asperities of human life; and there is a style of complaint which is thought pretty, and a sort of woe which has been indulged as luxury. If I might borrow a term from criticism for the use of ethics, I would denominate the querulous affectation of misery, the elegiac style of life. The plaintive tone of elegiac language, and the soft tinge of melancholy, without any real cause, are very similar to the conversation and sentiments of those numerous complainers who have adopted the elegiac style of life, because they considered it as pretty.

I reverence the sorrows of the truly unhappy. Their tears are sacred. But those who affect a sensibility

sensibility which they do not possess, and act a woe which they never felt, are to be considered as ridiculous and reprehensible, because they make a mock of human misery, and sport with that compassion which ought never to be abused, and which was designed for the comfort of unaffected affliction.

I respect the character of Mr. Gray as that of a man of remarkable virtue, learning, and genius, united. But he was melancholy without reason; and, I apprehend, he was not entirely free from the wish to be considered as a man endowed with feelings unknown to the rest of men. Every man of genius certainly has acute feelings; but those feelings will lead him to high enjoyments, and will make life more pleasurable than painful, if he will but submit to the guidance of his reason, and also keep himself free from the affectation of singular misery. Pride, and an insatiable desire of praise, will indeed often cause, in the votaries of fame, pangs unknown to others, and which cannot be reasonably indulged.

*Palma negata macrum, donata reducit opimum
Sic leve, sic parvum est, animum quod laudis avarum
Subruit, aut reficit. —* HOR.

Many poets, professedly elegiac, have pretended to uncommon wretchedness; but they deceived

no sensible reader, since it was evident that their misery was no less fictitious than their mythology.

The affectation of woe is chiefly among the softer sex, in whom it is sometimes supposed to have been amiable. Pity, it has been said, is nearly related to love. But the pity must be sincere. Affected woe will only excite affected pity, which is nearly related to a passion very different from love. Beauty in tears, while those tears are believed to be natural, must powerfully call for the protection of every man not destitute of generosity; but if the call is found to have been frequently made without sufficient reason, though it may cause the attention of false and selfish gallantry, it will not raise the esteem of the estimable. She, who wishes for such esteem, will be prudent in divesting herself of every kind of affectation.

I am sorry to see a taste prevail for novels which exhibit unnatural pictures of misery, and diffuse a kind of taste for the woeful. The novel entitled *Werter*, is of a bad tendency, and cannot have failed to have given the falsely delicate, the over-refined, and the idolizers of themselves, additional encouragement in the affectation of misery.

Elegies,

Elegies, Elegiac Sonnets, Night Thoughts, and Contemplations on gloomy subjects, have a tendency to diffuse a shade over the imagination which shall cause in many a misery no less real than actual suffering; and they countenance more in seeking the gratification of a perverse vanity by pretending to singular wretchedness. There is certainly a great portion of evil in the world, real and unavoidable, and it seems a peculiar degree of folly to encrease it by affectation. Affectation will encrease it; for we become in time the characters which we have habitually assumed. It is particularly wrong in this country, where the inhabitants are naturally inclined to a dejection of spirits, to indulge the imagination in giving a sombrous and dismal colour to every thing around it. It is greatly in our power to make the horizon of our mind dark and cloudy, or serene as the blue æther, and beautiful as the variegated tints of a western sky in a fine summer evening.

It is a question in philosophy, *An quicquid recipitur, recipiatur ad modum recipientis*, Whether whatever is received (or perceived, as it suits the present subject better) be perceived according to the percipient's mode, or powers, or degree of perception; and I think it may be often answered, when applied to morals, in the affirmative. There is absolute good in life, and
absolute

absolute evil; but they both may be in a great degree transformed by the manner in which they are viewed and possessed. A sour disposition, operating like a chemical acid, will turn the sweetest cup into an unpalatable beverage; as a contented, placid, meek, and gentle mind, infusing sweetness into the bitterest draught, will cause the most nauseous medicine to be swallowed with alacrity.

To enjoy, and to be chearful, are duties. "To enjoy," says Mr. Pope, "is to obey." And though it is natural, and often unavoidable, to complain in affliction, yet to murmur, repine, and take a pleasure in complaining, while we have many reasons to rejoice, is irrational and ungrateful.

The fest of Whiners, or Grumblers (for it deserves to be stigmatized by no very honourable name), are very proper subjects for ridicule. It is fruitless to argue deeply or very seriously with folly and vanity. You will either not be understood by them, or not regarded; but a laugh against them, is like an instrument which touches to the quick, amputates the excrescence, or pulls it up by the roots.

Real misery will, I hope, always meet with sympathy. Nature has taken care that it should
affect

affect our feelings, in order to extort relief if possible. But the affectation, whether in books, in life, or in conversation, must find a different treatment, that it may be discountenanced.

Great caution should, however, be always used not to mistake real for affected misery. It is better that many pretenders to woe should be treated with superfluous sympathy and unnecessary attention, than that one real sufferer should be disregarded.

C H A P. V.

On bringing up children with ideas of higher stations, and more expensive modes of living, than they will be able to support on the death of their parents.

Quæ virtus et quanta, boni, sit vivere parvo;
Discite, non inter lances mensasque nitentes.

———— Male verum examinat omnis
Corruptus iudex.

HOR.

PHILOSOPHERS have often compared individuals of the human race to the various animals of the irrational creation. Some are said to resemble foxes, some hogs, and others asses; and the resemblance has been supposed to be so great as to contribute something to the support of the Pythagorean Metempsychosis. I believe the philosophers would not have erred if, while they were reciting resemblances, they had said, that a great part of mankind are like the peacock, which appears to take its greatest pleasure, and to place its chief good, in the display of its gaudy finery. As to the transmigration of souls, some have thought that so great an attention to the beautiful appearance of the body, argues something in these persons against the existence of the soul at all; so that I do not pretend

pretend to corroborate from the circumstance of their likeness to the bird of Juno, the whimsical doctrine of the old philosopher.

To make a figure, to the utmost extent of their ability, is the scope of people of fashion; as to expand the plumage of its tail in all its pride is the supreme bliss of the peacock; whose internal qualities, and real value, (which, by the way, are in that respect like the vain votaries of fashion), by no means correspond with the ostentatious appearance.

As the desire of distinction is natural, so the wish to make a figure, even in externals, while it is limited by right reason, and urges not to the violation of prudence and justice, is innocent at least, though scarcely laudable. But it is found in this age to lead to an expensive mode of living, and to the affectation of a splendour greatly above what the rank requires, and the fortune can support.

The house must be larger, the servants more numerous, the table more luxurious, and the equipage more splendid than either a sense of decorum, or a prudential regard to the permanent interest of the family, can admit. And what is the inducement? The hope of being
received

received into company which assumes the envied title of People of fashion. The aspirants to this honour are indeed freely received ; but if it is suspected that they make a shew without much substance to support it, they are commonly held in low esteem ; and the subterfuges they are obliged to use to conceal their inferiority, renders the state, which after much difficulty they have obtained, truly uneasy. They indeed enjoy, in fancy, the pleasure of gratified pride, and are too rapidly whirled in the circle which they have chosen, to find leisure for reflection. But this is a state which no rational creature, who possesses the faculty of which he boasts as his noblest distinction, can deem desirable. And yet, for the sake of this distinction, what sacrifices are made ? Health, peace, and the plenty of a competency, are the usual price of the dear-bought purchase. Neither do these ostentatious people enjoy themselves sincerely ; for they are conscious of imprudence and injustice ; and however they may attempt to stifle the voice of reason, they will sometimes be compelled to hear it ; if not at the assembly and masquerade, yet on their pillows, and in their chamber, when, after all their efforts to escape, they are under an unavoidable necessity of *communing with themselves, and of being still.*

The

The creditors and the children of the numerous tribes who live above their rank and fortune, experimentally feel and deplore that my representation is not the fiction of a declaimer. The creditors wait so long for payment as to lose their profit in the interest, and often rejoice if they receive ten shillings in the place of twenty. Many of them have been reduced to beggary by supplying the vain with the necessaries of life; for it so happens, that those who supply the vanities of life, are often paid with ostentatious liberality and alacrity; while he who sells bread, meat, and raiment, is obliged to take out a commission of bankrupt, or sue in vain by a tedious and vexatious process of the law.

The children suffer cruelly. They are introduced into a walk of life which they must relinquish forever on the departure of their parents. The money that should have been kept as a reservoir to supply their wants during life, in adversity, and in old age, has flowed in profusion to furnish superfluities in the season of health and youth. Their sentiments, habits, pleasures, and prospects, are all in high life; yet their fortunes are such as must detain them in a state of dependence, if not of servitude. But supposing enough left to enable a large family to live in competent plenty, yet, as they have been used to ostentation and luxury, that plenty which
would

would otherwise have afforded comfort, and been considered as a blessing, is viewed in the light of penury and meanness; and that middle station in which they were born, and might have enjoyed as much happiness as belongs to human nature, is considered by them as a fallen state. Consequently, instead of feeling and displaying a cheerful and contented gratitude, they murmur and repine at their unfortunate condition.

I knew a family, the father of which had an estate of five hundred a year. There were five children to enjoy it with him while he lived, and to inherit it when he should die. But his lady was of opinion that he would serve his family most, by introducing them into company and life, and forming valuable connections. The truth was, she loved a gay and dissipated life, and was but too successful in persuading her husband to adopt her plan. A style and mode of living was immediately engaged in, which would require, on the most moderate computation, one thousand a year. There was no mode of increasing the income, the father having no profession, and being above all trade. The whole time and attention of the family was devoted to dress, fashionable diversions, and visiting a circle of neighbours, some of whom were East India nabobs, baronets, and lords.

The

The consequence was unavoidable. On the death of their parents, the children found that every foot of land, and all the goods and chattels, belonged to importunate creditors, who, after having sustained a heavy loss, eagerly seized every remainder of property; so that they saw themselves, literally, not worth a single shilling. They might, with much reason, be unhappy in their situation, as their hopes and prospects had once been so elevated; but their misery was much increased by their inability to render themselves useful in society, and to compensate the unkindness of their fortune by personal exertion; for they really had learned nothing but the arts of dress, and the expensive modes of fashionable life. Two of the sons were sent to the East Indies by the interest of a compassionate neighbour; one took to the highway, and, after a narrow escape, was obliged to transport himself into Africa: The daughters went into service, but being above it, were discarded with insults; till sick of attempting in vain, one died of disappointment, and the other sought dishonest bread in the misery of prostitution. So ends the splendour, the luxury, the pride of a family, which, if it could have been contented with the comforts of a most valuable competency, might at this time have been flourishing in reputation, plenty, and prosperity. I have known many
cases

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cases where the misery of innocent children has been caused by the vanity of unthinking parents, led astray by the *ignis fatuus* of vanity, aping the manners of high and fashionable life.

But what? is there no such thing as solid comfort with a moderate fortune, and in the middle state? Must we forever labour to leave the rank in which Providence has placed us, in order to relish our existence? Must we be guilty of injustice and cruelty, in order to be happy? Believe it not. Things are not so constituted. But the votaries of vanity, though they may possess a good share of natural understanding, are usually furnished but slenderly with philosophy and religion. They know not how to chuse for themselves the chief good, but, blindly following the multitude, suffer themselves to be led, in the journey of life, by the false light of a vapour, rather than by the certain guidance of the polar star, or the magnetic needle.

I wish I could induce them to consider duly the nature and value of solid comfort. But we do consider it, say they; we consider what pleases ourselves, and we pursue it with constancy. Are you convinced, I ask in return, that what you pursue affords you pleasure? Is it not true, on the contrary, that you live
rather

rather to please others than yourselves? You certainly live in the eyes of others; of others, as vain and proud of externals and of trifles as yourselves, and in their applause or admiration you place your happiness. So long as you can display the gaudy appearance of gaiety and ease, you patiently submit to the real and total want of them. I urge you then again, to pursue solid comforts, and relinquish vanity. You ask me to describe what I mean by solid comforts. It is easy enough to conceive them; but as you desire it, I will attempt the obvious enumeration, and then leave you to your own dispassionate and unprejudiced reflections.

These, I think, afford solid comforts: *a quiet conscience, health, liberty, one's time one's own, or if not, usefully, and innocently, and moderately employed by others; a freedom from inordinate passions of all kinds; a habit of living within one's income, and of saving something for extraordinary occasions; an ability, arising from rational œconomy, to defray all necessary and expedient expences; a habit of good humour, and aptitude to be pleased rather than offended; a preparation for adversity; love of one's family, sincerity to friends, benevolence to mankind, and piety to God.* Compare this state and these dispositions with those of affected people of fashion, embarrassed in circumstances, distressed

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by vain cares, tossed about by various passions and vain fancies, without any anchor to keep their frail bark from the violence of every gulf. But it is not worth while to dilate on the comparison; let the hearts of the deluded votaries of vanity decide in the silence of the night season, when they recline on their pillows, when the lights of the assembly are extinguished, and when the rattling of carriages is heard no more.

C H A P. VI.

Of Xenophon's Memoirs of Socrates.—The best antient books, when translated, disappoint the English reader, &c.—*Socraticæ Chartæ* recommended.

A PERSON who should walk about the streets of a great city, and give his opinion on all subjects to those whom he might happen to meet, would be thought in the present age a ridiculous enthusiast, or a pitiable madman. Yet it is certain, that he whom the world has long revered as the wisest of mortals, dispensed his advice in this manner, and was, while alive, the object of envy rather than of contempt, as he has been since his death of admiration.

Socrates committed not his philosophy to writing, and the world would have been deprived of the inestimable treasure, if his grateful scholars, Xenophon and Plato, had not preserved it.

Xenophon's *Memorabilia* of him abound with a most admirable morality ; but it is to be wished, that all passages alluding to a very doubtful kind of friendship could be omitted in the future edi-

tions of this invaluable relique of antiquity. Without this retrenchment, the mind of the reader will often be offended with ideas which cannot fail of raising disgust at all times, but more particularly in a discourse abounding with the finest sense, and with precepts of the purest virtue.

I hope the admirers of ancient wisdom will pardon me, when I presume to say, that many of the conversations are tediously protracted, and that the great Socrates, in the abundance of his good humour, trifles egregiously. It is however equitable to suppose that, to insinuate his important advice with success, it was necessary to avoid alarming the minds of his hearers, and that the beginning of his conversations should have an air of alluring levity. This was probably in unison with the minds of those whom he addressed. It drew their attention. They would have shut their ears against every thing which he had to offer, if he had begun by professing a design to reclaim them from vice and folly in a formal harangue. They would have hastened from him, and turned his attempts to ridicule. But his jocularities detained them, and his good sense, in the conclusion, pointed out their errors, and taught them the expediency of a reformation. Yet though this may apologise for levity

vity and trifling in the actual conversations of the living Socrates, it cannot render them entirely agreeable to a judicious reader of modern times, for whom the artifice is not necessary.

I read Xenophon's *Memorabilia* in Greek, and I was delighted with them. I read them in an English translation, and I found them tedious and insipid. The translation was apparently performed with sufficient fidelity; but it did not affect or strike with any peculiar force. I have experienced effects exactly similar in the perusal of other books. To what shall I attribute them? Are there such charms in the Greek language as are able to give a value to sentiments which of themselves have no recommendation? Certainly not: But there is a conciseness, and, at the same time, a comprehension of expression in the Greek language, which, I think, the English cannot equal. On the mind of a reader who completely understands the language of a Greek author, the ideas are impressed with more force and perspicuity by the original, than by any translation. The ancient Greek authors, it is acknowledged, paid great attention to the art of composition, to the choice and arrangement of words, and to the structure of periods, so as to communicate the idea or raise the sentiment intended with peculiar

force and precision. Xenophon is known to have been one of the most successful cultivators of the art of composition ; and it cannot be supposed that all who have undertaken to translate any of his works, though they might understand the matter, could have equalled him in the art of composition for which his country and himself were remarkably celebrated.

The pleasure which a reader feels in the perusal of a Greek author, has been attributed to the pride of conscious superiority over those who are not able to unlock the treasures of which he keeps the key. This opinion has owed its origin to the poor appearance which some of the most celebrated authors of antiquity have made, when presented to the public in the dress of a modern language. The English reader has read translations of the classics, without being able to discover any excellence adequate to the universal reputation of the author. The translator, though he comprehended his author, was perhaps a poor writer, unable to communicate with spirit the thoughts which he conceived with a sufficient degree of accuracy. The blame unjustly fell on the original author and on his admirers. *He* was supposed to have written poorly, and *they* to have admired him only from motives of pride and affectation. Some, whose ignorance

norance prevented them from deciding fairly, rejoiced to see that ancient learning, which they possessed not, despised; and eagerly joined in attributing to arrogance and pedantry all praise of Greek and Latin, to which they were inveterate enemies, as well as perfect strangers.

But the supposition that the pleasure which men feel in reading authors in the ancient languages, arises solely, or chiefly, from the pride of possessing a skill in those languages, is too unreasonable to be generally admitted. Of the many thousand admirers of the ancients, who, in every part of their conduct and studies, displayed great judgment and great virtue, must we suppose the greater part either deceived in the estimate of the authors whom they read, or actuated by pride, and mistaking the self-complacency of conscious learning and ability for the pleasure naturally arising from the study of a fine author? Why is not a man, who understands Welch, German, Dutch, and any other language, not remarkable for literary productions, as much inclined to extol the writers in those languages as the reader of Greek and Latin, if the motive for praise consists only in possessing a knowledge of a language unknown to the majority of his countrymen or companions?

In accounting for the great esteem in which the Greek and Latin authors are held, much must be attributed to the LANGUAGES SOLELY, and exclusively of thought, doctrine, or method. Many who are but poorly qualified to give any opinion on the subject, will impute it to pedantry, when I say, that those languages possess inherent beauties, and an aptitude for elegant and expressive composition, to which the best among modern languages can make no just pretension. Till, therefore, an ancient Greek author can be translated into a language equal to his own, it will be unjust and unreasonable to form a final judgment of him from the best translation.

But, to return to Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, with the consideration of which I began this paper. It has been usual, among the admirers of Socratic morality, to compare it with the evangelical. I am ready to acknowledge the great excellence of it, but I see very clearly that it is no more to be compared to the Gospel than the river Nile to the Pacific Ocean.

I cannot, however, avoid recommending the *Socraticæ Chartæ*, or the fine Ethics of Socrates, as preserved by Xenophon and Plato, to every student who is designed for the sacred profession. He will there find a store of fine observations,
maxims,

maxims, and precepts, which he may recommend with authority and success to his people, under the sanction, and with the improvements of Christianity.

Dr. Edwards's attempt to discover a *system* in the *Memorabilia* of Socrates, notwithstanding its ingenuity, seems to be unsuccessful. It resembles the ingenious efforts of many critics to reduce Horace's Epistle *ad Pisones* on the Art of Poetry, to the methodical regularity of a technical recipe for making poems. Some critics, like the old gardeners, have no idea of beauty, unless every thing is laid out by the line and rule, the level and the square.

C H A P. VII.

Of the rashness of medical writers.—They should read and practise before they pretend to teach.—Wrong to be one's own physician, or to read on physic without singular accomplishments and judgment.

W Henever men of liberal education and long experience have presented their medical remarks to the public, they have justly obtained the praise of ingenuity and benevolence. Fame increased their practice, and practice rewarded them with well-earned opulence. Who can deserve it better than he of whom it can justly be said, that he is OPIFER PER URBEM in his practice, and PER ORBEM in his communications to the public?

But others, observing that such have owed their celebrity, and consequently their fortunes, to a pamphlet or treatise on some disease, have resolved, at all events, to write and publish a treatise as soon as they had bought their diploma.

In order to attract notice, it became necessary to *distinguish* their works among a multi-

multitude of others, by some extraordinary doctrine or position; and I am informed that things of a most dangerous tendency, and sometimes certainly fatal, have been plausibly recommended by fool-hardy or knavish candidates for medical popularity.

AUDE ALIQUID seems to be considered as a prescription for procuring a dispensary.

The great object of such persons is to recommend something *new*, something extraordinary, something that marks a genius, either as a medicament, or as a surgical operation. If poison can be administered in any form without certain and immediate death, it is soon advanced to the rank of a panacea, and the inventor hopes to equal Radcliffe in riches, and Hippocrates in fame.

Time shews the inefficacy of the boasted invention; but it is to be feared that many fall victims to it before the full discovery of its ill effects, or the danger of relying upon it because of its inutility.

Whoever takes a retrospective view of medicines which have been highly extolled, and generally used, will find many of them at present in a total disrepute. Yet, if you will be-

lieve the writings which recommended them on their first appearance, their beneficial efficacy was indubitably confirmed by innumerable cases. If they were efficacious once, they are probably still efficacious; for it is not to be believed that, by any causes whatever, the human body can have undergone a total change since their introduction. But they are now perhaps pronounced by the best judges utterly inefficacious or pernicious; and there is reason therefore to conclude that they were always so; and owed their popularity and success to novelty, or to the activity, address, and recommendation of some artful professor of medicine.

But though the world might profit by uniform experience of the fallacy of medical pretensions, yet, as there is always a new generation rising, the same arts are again practised, and practised with singular success. In nothing are men more easily deluded than in the pretensions of medical practitioners.

It must be acknowledged, that the temerity of making experiments may casually lead to improvements in medical science; but it is a cruel temerity; for the experiments are made at the hazard of life. A young man who hastily recommends to the public a powerful medicine,
without

without due experience of its effect, which is too common in the present times, may be guilty of homicide, in a thousand melancholy instances, when he intended only to advance his own fame and fortune.

The spirit of research and adventure is laudable in young men; but when it produces works to the public which endanger health and life, it ought to be under greater restraint than the sanguine disposition of raw practitioners, inventors, and projectors, is willing to allow. But I appeal to their humanity, and hope they will condescend to submit their treatises, previously to publication, to three or four of the most eminent and oldest physicians, (or surgeons, if the subject be chirurgical,) and even after that, to express themselves with doubt and diffidence on the certainty of their discoveries. They will act humanely as well as prudently in adding a *Chapter of Cautions* in the use of whatever they recommend.

Indeed, if medical publications were read only by medical professors and practitioners, there is reason to hope that the rashness of a writer might be corrected by the caution and skilful experience of the professional reader. But, in these times, every man and woman

reads a book in which they think themselves interested, and the sanguine pamphlet of a young physician, who is able to dress his fancies in a language tolerably agreeable and perspicuous, falls into the hands of those who are totally ignorant of medicine, both practical and theoretic, and who, imagining their own case to be exactly described in the book, take the medicine just as it is prescribed, without regard to the difference of age, seasons, or symptoms. Constitutions are thus ruined by those who speciously pretend to have discovered their preservative.

It is a sad instance of human depravity when, from motives of sordid interest or foolish vanity, men will trifle and tamper with the health and lives of their fellow-creatures, especially when their profession is to cherish health and prolong life.

But since there is no reason to suppose that rash physicians will discontinue the practice of publishing their crudities, it is certainly right to advise invalids, and all who are not in the medical and chirurgical profession, not to read any books on physic. This advice is indeed proper even when the books are acknowledged to be solid, and known to be authenticated by long experience; for, such is our weakness, especially in the hour of sickness, that we are apt to imagine
every

every bad symptom, and almost every disease of which we read, to be our own: and the power of the imagination in augmenting disease, is not only well known to physicians, but felt by general experience.

After all that can be said in praise of medicine, it is confessed, by the most sensible physicians, to be a very doubtful point, whether it has been more beneficial or injurious. It is an uncertain art. This however is not doubtful, but very clear, that in the hands of the young, the inexperienced; and the rash, it is dreadfully destructive of the human race. What must it be then when every man is his own physician? When he reads a crude pamphlet on a disease under which he supposes himself to labour, and, without any preparatory knowledge, administers boldly whatever is recommended in the confidence of ignorance, or with the specious persuasion of a self-interested writer. Abstain therefore from medical books, and apply, in sickness, to the best physician or apothecary within reach of your situation. Professional men themselves do not usually prescribe for themselves or families in extreme cases; but call in the assistance of those who, with every advantage of speculative and practical skill, have also the additional advantage of being able to act with a cooler and more deliberate

berate judgment than any man can usually exert, when his own happiness is deeply interested.

Among the inconveniencies attending the multitude of books in the present times, it is one, that every man is instructed by some interested divulger of mysteries, to be his own operator or counsellor in every department. Every Man may be his own Lawyer, Physician, Divine, Gardener, Broker, and Builder. This, it might be supposed, would injure the several professors; but experience seems to prove that it serves them; every man attempting every thing for himself, without experience, and solely by the partial and imperfect directions of books, renders every thing worse; and the professor is called in at last, and finds much more employment, than if his assistance had been sought before the bungling efforts of ignorance had rashly interposed.

C H A P. VIII.

Horæ subsecivæ—Or leisure hours—Reading proper for them—Short pieces, easy to be understood, resembling conversation—Newspapers.

THERE are fragments of time in the life of every man, in which, from inconvenience of circumstances, he is unable either to read with continued attention, or to enjoy the advantages of select company. In those intervals, such books are pleasant as amuse and inform in very short sections or chapters, in an easy and perspicuous style, resembling, as much as possible, the variety and familiarity of conversation.

Many of the French books, under the title of ANA, are, I think, particularly useful for the purpose of filling up a vacant interval. They are lively and various. They treat of history, literature, arts; subjects which amuse, without interesting in such a degree as to fatigue or excite the mind beyond the pitch of a pleasant tranquillity.

There is a great difference in the numerous *ana*. The best I ever read are not entitled *ana* indeed;

indeed; but they are exactly the same in their kind; I mean *Melanges d' Histoire et de Literature, par Monsieur Vigneul Marville*. The name of the author, it is said, was D'Argonne. The work abounds with pleasing anecdotes, written with grace and vivacity. The part I am displeased with is, the severe hypercriticism on Bruyere. It is ingenious but uncandid, and could proceed only from pique and prejudice. But I am speaking of amusement; and even mistaken criticism, written in the lively manner of D'Argonne, cannot but form an agreeable diversion.

Gesner recommends *ana* for the *horæ subsecivæ*, and also Choffin's *Amusemens Philologiques*, Martial's Select Epigrams, Owen's, Epictetus, Bouhours's *Pensees Ingenieuses*, Phædrus, De la Motte, Fontaine, Valerius Maximus, Erasmus's Apophthegms, and all other similar and detached pieces. None of these require great attention or exertion, and yet they amuse and instruct.

Selden's Table Talk, according to the French fashion, would be called *Seldeniana*, and it is very proper for a pocket companion; *comes jucundus in via pro vehiculo est*. Maxims and reflections, collections of poetry, letters, and fugitive pieces, with which this country abounds, are well

well adapted to the purpose of occasional amusement.

Indeed, the kind of books is sufficiently obvious ; and it is not necessary to enumerate them. They will occur to every man acquainted with books ; but, after all, in the present times, they are in danger of being entirely superseded by the newspapers.

The newspapers are *Melanges* of literature, of history, of criticism, of biography, of politics, of philosophy, of religion, of all that busy mortals are engaged in with ardour.

Quicquid agunt homines nostri est farrago libelli.

Their original object was the communication of political news ; but they have increased in number and in size to such a degree, that, to fill them all with a due variety of news, properly so called, is impossible. That source was soon dry, and other fountains were therefore broken up. There can indeed be no good objection to the deviation from the original purpose of political news ; for the intention of that was to amuse by the gratification of curiosity, and if innocent amusement, of a similar kind, can be obtained
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in the heterogeneous matter which they exhibit, they are still valuable and worthy of encouragement.

But in pursuit of distinction and variety, in the gratification of party resentment, and as the tools of faction, they have displayed a foul mass of falsehood, malignity, and folly; such diabolical calumny and detraction as degrades human nature, and could only have been expected from the agency of infernal and accursed spirits supplying the press of a Pandæmonium.

It is therefore become desirable to turn the eye from the dunghills in which nettles and rank weeds, at once poisonous and putrid, vegetate, to the cultivated gardens where beauty and decency continue to present all that is pleasing, and to remove whatever is offensive. Such are the *Melanges* of literature, history, morality, which I recommend as the proper amusement of a vacant hour.

The undertaking may be thought to resemble the cleansing of the Augean stable, and to require an Herculean strength, else one might endeavour to produce that desirable object, a reformation of newspapers. The dirty channels
which

which convey polluted waters might be taught to devolve a pleasant and salubrious stream.

I believe the conductors of the newspapers, as many of them are respectable men, would rejoice to see such a reformation as might enable them to pursue their occupations, and promote their private interest, without the necessity of being instrumental to the diffusion of poison through the various ranks of society.

Suppose then that, by mutual agreement, they obliged themselves to admit nothing which could degrade dignity, or injure reputation, or interrupt the peace of families, without ascertaining the truth of it, by requiring the authenticity of it to be confirmed by the name of the party which should desire to insert a letter or a paragraph.

This, it is true, would exclude some truth; but it would, at the same time, exclude much more falsehood and misrepresentation; and newspapers would rise in value and repute, as they would be considered as authentic and respectable records.

If the papers were not of so large dimensions, there would not be a necessity of supplying a quantity

tity of matter merely to fill the columns ; and, consequently, a more scrupulous selection might take place.

The King, and all who are put in authority under him, the Church and all its members, as well as all religious instructors of whatever denomination, should never be mentioned but in respectful terms. Their titles and honourable additions should accompany their names wherever it can be done without affectation or tedious formality. It should be considered, that newspapers go into the hands of the vulgar, the ignorant, the idle, the profligate, the thief, and the abandoned of every degree and species ; and that when once these are taught to speak disrespectfully of their superiors, whether ecclesiastical or civil, much of that subordination is disturbed which was settled for their benefit ; much of that restraint infringed which tended to keep them within limits. Lawless principles naturally produce lawless actions ; and there is every reason to believe that much of the dishonesty of the lower orders, much of the riotous and rebellious spirit of the times has been caused by the corruption of newspapers. I speak my thoughts freely, though I know the editors of newspapers have vengeance in their own hands, and are able to repel those who attack them with a lash of scorpions.

scorpions. But the shield of truth is a sufficient defence, and indeed a wound in a good cause makes an honourable scar.

Affairs of gallantry, as they are called, should be mentioned, if mentioned at all, with great delicacy. The mention of them at all, unless in cases of particular atrocity, tends only to confirm the impudence of parties concerned, and to increase debauchery by the seduction of example. It was lately usual to fill half a column with paragraphs, to puff (as the phrase is) the fashionable courtezans of the time, and to serve their interest. It is wonderful that papers, abounding in these subjects, can find admission into decent families, where there are wives and daughters of unfulfilled reputation.

There are some advertisements so evidently fraudulent, and others so grossly indecent, that he who aspires at the character of a good man, and a good citizen, will find it difficult to render the publication of them consistent with such a description.

It is not difficult to point out the deformities of the papers; for the features are prominent; but it is unnecessary. All considerate persons must have considered them, in the state in which they

they have often appeared, as pests and nuisances. I leave the subject with assuring the reader, that I have no personal cause of dislike to them. I disapprove them, because I think them publicly injurious. They have been inimical to all order, decency, propriety, truth, moderation; to virtue, to learning, and to religion: therefore an endeavour to reform them can want no apology, and none I make. I will add only one hint to the conductors of them which may avail when others are ineffectual. Let them consider, that by degrading newspapers from that dignity which they might possess as pleasant and useful vehicles of authentic information, they may gradually render them too contemptible for general notice. The wickedness of mankind, and the corruption of society, partly occasioned by them, may make such an event not very probable at present; yet it is certain that, in process of time, newspapers may become so worthless as to be universally despised.

If manners do not effect the diminution of the numbers of newspapers, laws may intervene to supply the place: and since it is the part of the legislature, and of all good government, to suppress every general nuisance, it may be apprehended (notwithstanding the clamours concerning the liberty of the press, the nonsense of

the *palladium*, and the like canting language of partizans), that the press may be hereafter restrained, and newspapers abolished or discouraged by an enormous impost. Nothing but the revenue arising from them preserves them at present from the limitations which they have long required, and for which the public good loudly calls.

I esteem the courage as well as ingenuity of Mr. Crabbe, who has attacked newspapers in a satirical poem abounding with truth, good verses, and good sense. The motto to his *NEWSPAPER* is so apposite, that I will transcribe it for the amusement of the classical reader.

E quibus, hi vacuas implent sermonibus aures
 Hi narrata ferunt aliò; mensuraque ficti
 Crescit, et auditis aliquid novus adjicit auctor:
 Illic credulitas, illic temerarius error,
 Vanaque lætitia est, consternatique timores,
 Seditioque repens, dubioque auctore susurri.

OVID.

C H A P. IX.

Miscellaneous literature—Books—Ecclesiastical history—Health of students, &c.

§ 1. **T**HERE were probably as many books, and perhaps as many bad books written by the ancients as the moderns; but the art of printing being unknown, and consequently the multiplication and preservation of books being attended with great trouble and expence, such as were of little intrinsic value, were not transcribed, copies of them were not encreased, and they consequently soon perished by the depredations of time.

§ 2. Half the ecclesiastical history now extant had been more advantageously forgotten than remembered. It is a mass of folly, absurdity and hypocrisy; yet divines of great name are often recommending it to the attention of young students in theology.

I know of few studies more likely to give a disgust for sacred things, and to cause scepticism and infidelity in a mind unseasoned, than the indiscriminate perusal of ecclesiastical history.

Let

Let us receive our religion as we find it, paying great respect to the authority of our forefathers and of the Church; but collecting our own principles, and forming our own conduct, from the only authentic and infallible records, the Sacred Scriptures.

But if one half of ecclesiastical history is disgraceful, the other is honourable to the Christian cause, and to this let us turn our attention. Why should we continue to hand down to posterity the annals of idiotism and insanity? Very little solid advantage is derivable from the study of such subjects, though much ostentation of learning may be displayed in it. In a field where there are gold mines, that industry is lamentably misplaced which is employed in digging for lead or clay.

§ 3. It is common to devote those children to learning who appear to be remarkable for imbecility of constitution: but a life of study requires great health. To the philosopher, the divine, and the lawyer, a strong constitution is more necessary than to the ploughman. The ploughman may improve a weak one by his occupation; by air and exercise; but the student will encrease his weakness by thought and bodily inactivity.

§ 4. Arith-

§ 4. Arithmetic and mathematical studies contribute to the health of the mind, after it has been long engaged in the *belles lettres*, in poetry, in oratory, in history. They brace it by the great exertion of reason, which they require, as gymnastic exercises brace the body. I knew a studious man who used to carry Wingate's Arithmetic in his pocket to amuse his leisure hours, and, he said, he found it a great relief after the study of languages and polite letters. I think it is said, that Johnson thought himself relieved from symptoms of insanity by computation.

§ 5. Learning may be obtained in modern times without the learned languages; but the attainment must be comparatively slow, difficult, and uncertain. It is well worth while in youth to take some pains to procure the keys of the treasury. There are many great readers of English only who acquire a great deal of science, properly so called, and a knowledge of men, and manners, and of history; but there is something insecure and imperfect in their best acquisitions; and, if they make any great proficiency, they certainly have much more trouble than those who have mastered the languages while they were at school.

§ 6. Abilities alone are not sufficient to make a great progress in learning. The government of the

the temper contributes greatly to it. Patience, moderation, coolness of judgment, virtue, and innocence enable a man to exert his abilities with ease to himself, without impediment, and without error.

§ 7. *Si quid est in libellis meis quod placeat*, says Martial, *dictavit auditor*. If there is any thing good in my book, the hearer or reader dictated it. It is astonishing how much the excellence of an oration depends on the rank, or abilities, or respectable character of the audience. A full church, a crowded theatre, a select company, rouse exertion. A man outdoes himself on extraordinary occasions. Cicero and Demosthenes would have found their flame expiring if they had spoken their orations to a thin assembly, to a careless or a tasteless auditory; but when their country hung on their lips, they drank in new portions genius, they caught fire, and shone with unrivalled brilliancy. Mr. Garrick could not read Shakspeare, or perform any part in private so well as upon the theatre. He was desired to read a most interesting play before the royal family in private; but he neither satisfied himself nor his hearers. A King could not elicit the fire, which was struck out by the pit, box, and galleries.

§ 8. It has always been the opinion of great philosophers, that corruption of eloquence is a symptom of corruption of morals. The taste that relishes a corrupt eloquence must itself be corrupt, and accompanied with a mind not well regulated. The taste in morals and the taste in letters arising from the same source, it is no wonder, when the source is corrupted, that both the streams are polluted. "Ubicunque," says Seneca, "videris orationem corruptam placere, "ibi mores quoque a recto descivisse non est "dubium. Quo modo conviviorum luxuria, "quo modo vestium, ægræ civitatis indicia "sunt, sic orationis licentia (si modo frequens "est) ostendit animos quoque, a quibus verba "exeunt, procidisse." *Seneca.*

Some critics have thought that the taste among us, at present, seems to favour a style resembling Seneca or Tacitus, and to prefer it even to the style of Cæsar, Cicero, and Livy; if so, it may be advantageous to recollect that those authors were admired in the decline of morals, liberty, and empire.

CHAP. X.

Honesty and simplicity frequently the characteristic of the true poet, philosopher, painter, and other artists of real genius.

MEN of genius see a beauty TO KAAON unknown to others in the subjects which they contemplate. They become enamoured with the form, and, like other lovers, regard but little many things which solicit the notice and attach the heart of most men.

Joseph Scaliger has said, *Jamais homme ne fut poete, ou aima la lecture des poetes, qui n'eût le cœur assis en bon lieu.* No man ever was a poet, or delighted in reading the poets, whose heart did not lie in the right place; and Horace said before him

————— *Levis hæc infania quantas
Virtutes habeat sic collige; vatis avarus
Non temerè est animus; versus amat, hoc studet unum.*

Poets and men of genius are frequently no one's enemies but their own. From their contempt of riches they too often fall into poverty, and live in an ignorance of that humble kind of wisdom, which, though it makes no conspicuous figure, contributes much to comfort.

They become the dupes of designing men; of little minds that grovel in the mire, and who, tho' they cannot see far above the earth, yet see their interest with great acuteness, and pursue it with artifice that seldom fails of good success, and who look upon men employing their time in making verses, pictures, or in reading books, as simpletons easily to be deceived, and their natural prey, as the pigeon is to the kite.

It is therefore much to be wished that, in obedience to the scriptural rule, men of genius would endeavour to unite the wisdom of the serpent with the innocence of the dove.

But as to this dove like innocence, there are who controvert, with powerful arguments, its peculiar prevalence in poets and men of genius. I rather think there is a tendency to it in them; but, as it happens in most general rules, there are many exceptions.

Horace says a poet is seldom avaricious; but proofs to the contrary may be brought: yet the assertion is, in general, true; for there are many more proofs of their want of thrift, and their contempt of riches.

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The instance of Pindar, in the second Isthmian ode, suggesting a hint to Xenocrates of Agrigentum whom he was celebrating, is cited as an instance of poetical meanness and avarice.

"*The muse,*" Pindar insinuated, "*is not mercenary; but a wise man has said, 'Riches make the man.'*" You, Xenocrates, are wise,—"*verbum sapienti.*"

This was Pindar's mode of asking his patron for money. In distress he might make such an application without being avaricious. The very want, which drove him to so disagreeable a necessity, might be occasioned by his contempt of money.

Mr. Pope was, I believe, rather attached to money, and knew how both to gain and keep it. But not so Spenser, nor Shakespeare, nor Dryden, nor Otway.

It is to be wished that poets, and artists of genius, would add discretion to their taste and skill; for it is lamentable that they who give so much pleasure to others should make themselves miserable.

There is, after all, something amiable in their simplicity and generosity. It preserves them from base actions. You may, in general, make a safe agreement with a man of genius; I mean, of true genius; for as to the mere pretenders to genius, many of them are remarkable for duplicity and knavery.

But if poets and men of genius are free from avarice, they have shewn themselves prone to other passions equally or more vicious. They have been voluptuaries in a culpable extreme; and, upon the whole, they do not appear to have surpassed the rest of mankind in happiness so much as in talents.

The pleasures of genius, in its exertions, are certainly exquisite; but the horrors of a gaol, and of want, or disease, must greatly lessen, if not totally destroy them; and the applause and renown bestowed upon them, however flattering to the human heart, are but a poor recompence for the aggravated distresses of private life, which often involve a wife and family. As genius must be supposed to have been bestowed as a gift conducive to the happiness of him who possesses it, let him take care to add to it discretion, and that useful kind of wisdom called common sense. The more fail, the more ballast is required.

C H A P. XI.

*Sermons—Dry discourses—Before the University—
Before the House of Lords and Commons—Inns
of Court—Very little adapted to make impression
—Such should be presented from the press, not
the pulpit—Fashionable insipidity of courtly ser-
mons—Fear of disgusting, and hurting interest.*

THE man who preaches well, and turns many from the error of their ways, is a better divine than the greatest orientalist, ca- suist, linguist, controversialist, that ever spent his days in solitary libraries, caused the press to groan with folios of dull dissertation, or sat with all the heavy dignity of silent self-im- portance in a professor's chair. The latter may have great internal merit; but he is, in the eye of reason, subordinate to the active divine who reduces theological knowledge to practical use, the end for which the others learning is but a preparatory mean; and a mean, very often, totally superfluous. The world judges otherwise, and the dull S. T. P. who never converted a sinner, visited the sick, comforted the desponding, promoted piety, charity, and peace, is honoured and preferred to the parish priest, whose life has been spent in active be-
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neficence,

neficence, in giving instruction, in alleviating misery, in teaching contentment and resignation.

The dull divine either communicates nothing, or communicates in a style or language unknown to the people; they therefore suppose him, after their manner of judging, to possess something of more value than any thing which they see or can approach with familiarity. An air of mystery secures to him a degree of veneration. *Omne ignotum pro magnifico est.* The good rector, vicar, or curate, residing among his flock, is seen every day, and, by familiarity, loses that great respect which the other, like Eastern monarchs, possesses through concealment. But the latter is as much more extensively useful than the former, as a guinea in circulation than a coin of an equal intrinsic value locked up as a curiosity in the cabinet of a virtuoso.

The respect paid to dull divines has introduced, among respectable preachers, a dry style of discourses from the pulpit, which, though subtle and learned, yet as it defeats the very purpose of preaching, and is totally inefficacious, in a large and mixed congregation, ought to be disapproved.

The first care of these preachers seems to be the preservation of their own dignity. I will
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not say it is the sole care; but the consequence is as bad as if it were; for some of the congregation will not listen for want of attraction, and the rest receive no more information, no more impulse to virtue and religion, than if they had sat at home and read a tract of speculative divinity in the silent recesses of their book rooms. The dull matter is usually accompanied with a dull manner; and the whole effect of the *viva vox* is lost by the pride, the indolence, the affectation, or the dulness of the preacher. Think of a preacher haranguing from the pulpit a parish like that of St. James, St. Giles, Whitechapel, or Shore-ditch, in the style of writing and utterance which he would use in reading a divinity lecture in the Theological School, near the Pig-market at Oxford.

Sermons before the universities may, indeed, be considered as exercises in theology, intended for the improvement of both preacher and hearer in the theory of religion. If they are in the style which rhetoricians call *exilis*, the meagre and jejune, perhaps it may be excused, as being merely didactic, designed *docere*, non *persuadere* et *movere*, to teach doctrines, not to persuade the will or move the affections. And yet when it is considered that the greater part of the audience, in the universities, always consists

of young men and of the common parishioners, I know not whether this apology can fully justify the languor of a pulpit dissertation. The truth is, that on most public occasions, and before a learned audience, the preacher ascends the *rostrum* to display his own attainments and ingenuity, and that the edification of the hearers is a secondary purpose. Human nature is prone to vanity, and let him who censures it in others set the example of a total exemption from it himself. But I cannot help thinking, that vanity might be more effectually gratified by a livelier and more energetic address to the hearers. The impression would be deeper, and the preacher's eloquence more honoured: but eloquence in these pulpits is less aimed at than ingenious and erudite disquisition.

The dull, dry, torpid, languid, soporific style displays itself in all its academical grace, in sermons at Westminster Abbey before the Houses of Lords and Commons. These are commonly printed, and few things ever came from the press more insipid; mere water-gruel, or rather mere chips in porridge. You may read several of them, and not find the name of Jesus Christ once inserted. The name of God is sparingly admitted. A passage from scripture might spoil a period, or give the discourse a vulgar air. No attempt

attempt to strike the imagination or move the passions. The first aim of the preacher seems to be to give no disgust to a fastidious audience; to go through the formality, with all the tranquillity of gentle dulness, neither ruffled himself, nor rudely daring to disturb his hearers. He is usually, before his Maker, in a temporal sense, on these occasions, and must therefore carry his dish very upright, and be upon his good behaviour, or he may hinder his preferment, and retard his translation. A bold rebuke, a spirited remonstrance against fashionable vice, against vain babbling, against reviling each other in the senate, might fix the preacher in his place for life, as the frost congeals the stream. It is safer to talk about good old King Charles and King David, the Jews and the Samaritans, the Scribes and the Pharisees, the Greeks and the Romans.

Dullness seems to be considered as a constituent part of dignity; and when a great man is desired to preach an occasional sermon, he assumes something of an owl-like heaviness of manner to preserve the appearance uniformly majestic. If his discourse is not understood, so much the better. It may then be supposed to contain any thing, and every thing; and, as imagination exceeds reality, the preacher's fame is likely to gain by the artifice.

I have

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I have often lamented, that at assize sermons, the same dullness has been adopted. Such occasions furnish a very desirable opportunity to strike the minds of the common people with an awe of justice, with a fear of offending, with a conviction that the wages of sin are death. But the preacher, who means to shew his parts before the judge and the lawyers, commonly talks about jurisprudence, Roman and Justinian codes, the origin of civil government, municipal laws, and similar matters, prodigiously edifying indeed to the judge, but to the vulgar, and to the jury and other persons concerned, unintelligible as Arabic.

Ordination and visitation sermons may be, perhaps, allowed something of the privilege of theological lectures, though a rhetorical peroration affecting the heart might be, on such occasions, equally creditable and more beneficial; for, in truth, the student does not, at that time, require a theological lecture on abstruse subjects of divinity, but rather a persuasive exhortation which may strike his mind with an awful sense of the engagements into which he has entered, or is going to enter. He can read theology in his chamber.

Sermons before inns of court have been remarkable for dullness and want of animation.

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You would almost suppose the preacher to be reading one of the statutes or a law instrument, like a clerk at the assizes. He seems to stand in awe of the gentlemen of the long robe, and would not be thought to insult their understandings by addressing their passions. But the gentlemen, however learned in statutes, precedents, and legal formalities, are still but men, and might be influenced like other men, by the operation of the Word, which is described as sharper than a two-edged sword, in the hands of him who is duly skilled in its use. St. Paul made Felix tremble on the seat of judgment.

The cold manner is not proper for the pulpit, and should be confined to the schools of logic and metaphysics. But do I mean to satirize the clergy, it will be asked, and to encourage a disposition to depreciate them and their services? It will be unjust and uncandid to suspect that I can have any such intention. On the contrary, I wish the learned, the rational, and philosophical part of the clergy, to possess all that authority, and influence, and honour, which is due to their respectable characters, and to their attainments. But I have observed men totally different from them, certainly ignorant, almost irrational, and quite unphilosophical, engrossing the attention of the largest congregations

tions of Christian people. If the better sort mean to do good in the most extensive manner, they will not despise that popularity which can alone enable them to do it. They will lay aside pride, false delicacy, affectation, and display their attainments and abilities in a popular manner, with a manly eloquence, and with the appearance of sincerity as well as the reality. Then shall I see their churches crowded; for the people will certainly give them a decided preference whenever they shall descend to the taste and understanding of the people. Then shall I no more see with pain, the gentleman and the scholar, who has had every advantage of education, neglected for the irregular mechanic.

I am aware that my interference in this manner, however good my motive, may be attributed to an improper meddling with things of which the persons concerned are, in every respect, competent judges. Pride will spurn my hints; but, like seed scattered abroad, some may fall on ground congenial to its nature, and adapted to its growth. I would beg leave, before I dismiss a subject rather invidious, to refer the haughty despisers of popularity to a passage in the book of the Wise son of Sirach, where men who are *wise and eloquent in their instructions*, are at the same time praised for their popular

popular manner ; for it is added, that they were
MEET FOR THE PEOPLE.

Dr. Eachard gives the following specimen of metaphysical preaching. " Omnipotent all, " thou art only, because thou art only, and be- " cause thou only art : as for us, we are not, " but we seem to be, and only seem to be, be- " cause we are not ; for we are but mites of " entity, and crumbs of something : " as if, says he, a company of country people were bound to understand Suarez and all the school divines.

Bishop Butler seems to be the model of dry preachers in the superior order. Some of his sermons are, in every respect, excellent, and, as a philosophical disquisitor on theology, he is admirable ; but his disquisitions are, upon the whole, fitter for the closet than the pulpit. People will continue to slumber in churches, unless the discourse of the preacher is level to their capacities, and unless he rouses them by a judicious address to their passions and imagination. I recommend nothing frothy, nothing puerile, nothing fanatical ; but the manly force, the fire, the pathos, of a CHATHAM transferred to the pulpit. Leave Dulness to doze among the cobwebs of the schools ; lulled by the drowsy hum of dronish disputants in metaphysical theology.

C H A P. XII.

Unreasonable expectation of uniform excellence in a writer's manners, writings, and style—Corneille—Johnson—Modern biography.

THE character of Pierre de Corneille, the popular dramatic poet of France, induced those who approached him to expect something in his manners, address, and conversation above the common level. They were disappointed; and the like has happened in a thousand similar instances.

The friends of Corneille, as was natural enough, were uneasy at finding people express their disappointment after an interview with him. They wished him to appear as respectable when near, as when at a distance; in a personal intimacy, as in the regions of fame. They took the liberty of mentioning his defects, his awkward address, his ungentleman-like behaviour. Corneille heard the enumeration of his faults with great patience; and, when it was concluded, said, with a smile and with a just confidence in himself: "All this may be very true; but, for all that, I am still *Pierre de Corneille*."

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The numberless defects, infirmities, faults, and disagreeable qualities, which the friends of Dr. Johnson have brought to public light, were chiefly what, in less conspicuous men, would be passed over as foibles, or excused as mere peccadillos; and however his enemies may triumph in the exposure, I think he might, if he were alive, imitate Corneille and say: "For all this, I am still Samuel Johnson."

Few men could stand so fiery a trial as he has done. His gold has been put into the furnace, and really, considering the violence of the fire, and the frequent repetition of the process, the quantity of dross and alloy is inconsiderable. Let him be considered not absolutely but comparatively; and let those who are disgusted with him ask themselves, whether their own or the characters they most admire would not exhibit some deformity, if they were to be analysed with a minute and anxious curiosity. The private conversation of Johnson, the caprice of momentary ill humour, the weakness of disease, the common infirmities of human nature, have been presented to the public, without those alleviating circumstances which probably attended them. And where is the man that has not foibles, weaknesses, follies, and defects of some kind? And where is the man that has
greater

greater virtues, greater abilities, more useful labours, to put into the opposite scale against his defects;

Biography is every day descending from its dignity. Instead of an instructive recital, it is becoming an instrument to the mere gratification of an impertinent, not to say a malignant, curiosity. There are certain foibles and weaknesses, which should be shut up in the coffin with the poor reliques of fallen humanity. *Ubi plura nitent* in a character, the *pauca maculae* should be covered with the pall.

I am apprehensive that the custom of exposing the nakedness of eminent men to every eye will have an unfavourable influence on virtue. It may teach men to fear celebrity; and, by extinguishing the desire of fame and posthumous glory, destroy one powerful motive to excellence.

I think there is reason to fear lest the moral writings of Johnson should lose something of their effect by this unfortunate degradation. To prevent so mischievous an effect of his friends communications, I wish his readers to consider the old saying, *Nemo mortalium omnibus horis sapit*, and to reflect that reason and argument do

not

not lose any thing of their force from the errors and foibles of a writer's conduct. Let them also remember the famous passage

— Video meliora proboque

Deteriora sequar.

Is it to be believed that Addison would have appeared uniformly great, if the taste of his age, and the communicative disposition of his intimate friends, had published his private conversation, the secrets of his closet and of his chamber?

It was usual to write the lives of great men *con amore*, with affection for them, and there ran a vein of panegyric with the narrative. Writer and reader agreed in loving the character, and the reader's love was encreased and confirmed by the writer's representation. An ardour of imitation was thus excited, and the hero of the story placed, without one dissentient voice, in some honourable nich in the temple of Fame. But this biographical anatomy, in minutely dissecting parts, destroys the beauty of the whole; just as in cutting up the most comely body many loathsome objects are presented to the eye, and the beautiful form is utterly disfigured.

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It is said indeed that not only truth, but the whole truth, should be published and left naked for the contemplation of mankind; for as the anatomy of the body contributes to the benefit of human nature, by promoting medical and chirurgical knowledge; so the dissection of characters tends to the developement of error, which, by being thus exposed, may be avoided.

Some advantage may be derived to the philosopher from this exposure, but I fear little to the multitude. I am rather induced to believe, that the abasement of great characters, and the exposure of defects, prevents the salutary operation of their good example, and of their writings. The common reader does not make refined and philosophical observation. He only says, If such men, so learned, so great, so celebrated, were guilty of this failing, or remarkable for that misconduct, how can I attempt, with hope of success, to avoid it? He gives up the contest, and shelters his surrender under the name and authority of the deceased philosopher, whom he once admired, and endeavoured to imitate.

I think it was Egypt in which a tribunal was established to sit in judgment on the departed. Johnson has been tried with as accurate an investigation

investigation of circumstances as if he had been judicially arraigned on the banks of the Nile.

It does not appear that the witnesses were partial. The sentence of the public, according to their testimony, has rather reduced him; but time will replace him where he was, and where he ought to be, notwithstanding all his errors and infirmities, high in the ranks of Fame. Posterity will forgive his roughness of manner, his apparent superstition, his mistakes in making his will, his prejudices against Whigs and the Scotch, and will remember his Dictionary, his moral writings, his biography, his manly vigour of thought, his piety, and his charity. They will make allowances for morbid melancholy; for a life, a great part of which was spent in extreme indigence and labour, and the rest in the midst of affluence, flattery, obsequiousness, submission, and universal renown.

The number of writers who have discussed the life, character, and writings of Johnson, is alone sufficient to evince that the public feels him to be a *great man*, and it will not be easy to write him down through mistaken friendship or declared enmity. It proves him to be a great man; but mortal man, however well he may deserve the epithet Great comparatively, is absolutely but

a little being; and the example of Johnson is additional proof of this obvious but humiliating conclusion. I wish, nevertheless, that his Life had been written in the manner of the French *Eloges*, and with the affection due to superior merit.

Many of his apparent friends, one may suppose, were of those who forced themselves into his company and acquaintance in order to gain credit, and gratify their own vanity. They had little cordiality of affection for him, and no objection to lower his memory, if they could raise their own names to eminence on the ruins. Many of them had been hurt by his freedom of rebuke, and were glad to gratify revenge when retaliation was out of his power. If he were alive, he would crush the swarms of insects that have attacked his character both in conversation and in writing, and with one sarcastic blow, flap them into non-existence.

C H A P. XIII.

*Modern satirists—Party spirit—Spirit of levelling
—Attack of the King.*

MR. Pope has introduced a harmony of verse which, however difficult to invent, is imitated with ease. The close of the sense in couplets, and the frequent antitheses in the second line, are features so prominent, that an artist of inferior skill, a mere *faber imus*, is able to copy them, and to preserve a resemblance.

His translation of Homer is a treasury of splendid language; and he who has studied it will not find himself at a loss for shining epithets adapted to every occasion. I detract not from his merit; for as the improver of English versification, as the introducer of a brilliant diction unknown before, he has justly obtained universal fame.

But that which is laudable in him as the inventor, cannot entitle his mere imitators to any great applause. They may be called good versifiers, pretty poetasters, but they cannot rank with their master as a poet, or an original improver of versification.

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While they exercised their imitative skill on subjects not at all injurious, they might obtain approbation, and would certainly escape censure; but the candid, the moderate, and impartial part of mankind, have lamented that they have stolen the graces of Pope's versification to decorate and recommend a kind of satire, abounding in virulent and personal invective.

I am sensible that some works of this kind have been extolled in the highest terms; but I know, at the same time, that the extravagant applause was, in great measure, the ebullition of party zeal, or of that unhappy disposition of the human mind which prompts it to rejoice in seeing elevated merit or rank degraded by defamation. Take away from such poems the personality, the local and temporary allusions, and how small a portion will remain of real genius to recommend them! They would not be read notwithstanding their glare of epithet and their sonorous numbers.

It is usual with these works to rise to universal fame immediately on publication, to bask, like the ephemera, in the sunshine for a day, and then to fall into a sudden and irretrievable obscurity,

One of the principal arts of their writers is to secure attention by seizing the topic of the hour, by filling their poems with the names of persons who are the subject of conversation at the moment, and by boldly surprizing their readers with attacks on the most respectable characters, or at least on persons who, from their rank and their offices, provided they are tolerably decent, ought to be exempted from virulent abuse and public obloquy. It is the interest of the community that persons of high stations, whose example is powerful, and whose authority ought to carry weight, should not be held out to the vulgar as objects of derision. If they have common failings, or have been guilty of human errors, a veil should be thrown over them for the sake of decorum, and of that beautiful order in society, which conduces to a thousand beneficial purposes.

But a spirit of levelling high characters and rank is one of the distinguishing marks of the present times. It was introduced by what is called the Opposition. Unfortunately for all that is decent, and honourable, and right, it has been judged expedient that government, or the ministers of government, should be constantly embarrassed by a standing opposition. The tools employed by the leaders of this opposition are

often such as are only fit for dirty work. Unable to effect any more laudable purpose, they have been employed to asperse the characters of the temporary possessors of office, and its consequent powers and emoluments. Not satisfied with attacking the political persons, they have dared to go farther, to enter into the privacies of family retirement, and to spare neither age nor sex in divulging whatever envy has suggested. The poetical satirist has been called upon as a powerful auxiliary in conducting the levelling engine. Some read and are pleased with verse, who would have overlooked the invective in humble prose. Good versifiers have been found, and the most exalted persons in the kingdom cruelly hitched in a rhyme, and thrown out to the vulgar to be tossed about by the tongue of infamy.

Every loyal subject, every gentleman, every considerate father of a family, every man of common humanity, is hurt at the cruel and opprobrious treatment which the King, the very fountain of honour, has experienced from the hands of rhyming ruffians.

Great pretensions to good humour, mirth, and gaiety, are made by the satirists; but the pretensions are a veil of gauze. It is easy to see, through the pellucid disguise, the snakes of envy, the

the horrid features of malice, the yellow tinge of jealousy, the distortions of disappointment grinning with a Sardonic smile.

Hic nigræ succus loliginis, hæc est
Ærugo mera.

But as a veil is used, as diversion and pleasure are promised, and as detraction from illustrious merit is but too agreeable to most men, the poems are read, and do much mischief in the short period of their existence.

The pain they give to individuals who are burned with a caustic, yet are conscious of having given no provocation, is enough to render the practice odious in the eyes of all who consider duly how much a feeling mind suffers on such occasions, and how little right a dark and malignant assassin can have to inflict a punishment without an offence; to bring an accusation without coming forward as the accuser.

The practice is injurious to the public, as it tends to discourage the growth of virtue and all honest attempts to be distinguished by merit. Such attempts of necessity render a man conspicuous; and he no sooner becomes so than he is considered as a proper mark for scorn to shoot at, and for envy to asperse. A man may be afraid

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to exert himself when, every step he advances, he is the more in danger of attracting notice, and, consequently, of becoming the mark at which the malevolent may *bend their bows, and shoot out their arrows, even bitter words.*

What a triumph to villainy, profligacy, and ignorance, when virtuous, and innocent, and in-offensive characters are singled out for that satire which themselves only can deserve.

This is a *vis digna lege regi*. Expostulation is in vain; and laws, which might restrain it, will not be duly executed, in a country where licentiousness is unfortunately considered as essential to the existence of civil liberty.

C H A P. XIV.

On the literary Character of Julius Cæsar.

JULIUS CÆSAR, like the greater part of men distinguished by genius, began to display his inventive powers in the pleasant walks of poesy. In early youth he wrote *Œdipus*, a Tragedy, and the Praise of Hercules, which I imagine was a kind of epic poem; but Augustus prohibited the publication of them both, lest they should expose any marks of juvenile imperfection, and disgrace the Imperial family. It should be mentioned also, as an instance of Julius Cæsar's industry, that he compiled a volume, to which he gave the name of *Dicta collectanea*, consisting of the remarkable apophthegms of remarkable men. Augustus suppressed this also from a scrupulous regard for the honour of the house of Cæsar.

One cannot help wishing that the juvenile productions of so distinguished a man had been preserved as curiosities. Though they might not have been exempt from the defects of immature judgment, there is every reason to conjecture that they abounded in elegance and taste.

At a later period, this great man wrote a poem, entitled *Iter*, or the *Itinerary*. It gave an account of his expeditious progress from Rome to Hispania ulterior; and was probably in the style and manner of Horace's *Iter Brundisium*.

I am the rather induced to believe that Cæsar wrote in the Horatian manner *sermoni propria*, because the little specimen which remains of Cæsar's poetry is in that style. It is the well-known fragment on Terence preserved by Donatus.

Tu quoque, tu in summis, O dimidiate Menander, &c.

In the Dialogue of an admirable author on the Causes of the Corruption of Eloquence, there is a passage which reflects but little honour on Cæsar as a poet. Cæsar and Brutus, says he, wrote verses and deposited them in libraries; they did not make better verses than Cicero, but yet more happily, since fewer knew that they made them at all. *Non melius quam Cicero, at felicius, quia illos fecisse pauciores sciunt.*

Cæsar's verses, it is probable, were not very striking, as may be collected from an anecdote recorded of them by Plutarch. When Cæsar

was

was taken by pirates, he solaced himself in his disagreeable situation, by composing orations and verses. He read his verses to his captors, hoping to receive the flattering tribute of their applause; but the hardy adventurers had no ear for verse. Caesar gave way to a momentary resentment, called them stupid barbarians, and affirmed that they deserved crucifixion. It cannot be supposed that he revenged the mortification his pride received in a manner so tyrannical; but it is certain that, as soon as he was liberated, he ordered the poor pirates to be nailed to the cross. Crucifixion, it is to be hoped, was a punishment for the want of honesty, and not of taste.

Notwithstanding this vindictive spirit, it would have been happy if his ambition had been poetical rather than political. It might have saved the deluge of blood through which he waded to empire. According to his own confession, the conquest of Gaul occasioned the loss of *one million two hundred thousand lives*; and it is supposed, that the civil wars in which he was engaged, destroyed an equal number. Dreadful effects of pride! Two million four hundred thousand lives destroyed by one man! Remarkable instance of the instability of human grandeur! for he enjoyed the peaceable possession of his power but five months!

But our present business is to consider Cæsar in the light of a scholar, not of a foldier. If his character as a poet is disputable, his talents as an orator, and his learning and sagacity as a philosopher, are highly and justly esteemed. By a rare union of different abilities he excelled at once in the elegance of polite letters, and in the severer department of recondite science.

As an orator, Cicero places him in the first rank, and Quintilian thinks he would have rivalled Cicero, had he devoted his abilities to the rostrum or tribunal. The elegance of his language was the peculiar excellence which distinguished him as an orator. He was more Attic than Cicero; and if he had transmitted his best orations down to posterity, Cicero would not have stood alone at the head of Roman orators. Cicero himself generously extols him, and thinks him equal to those who had made the study of eloquence the business of their lives.

Eloquence was cultivated by Cæsar only in subservience to his ambition. He knew that the Triumviri, in the plenitude of their usurping power, could cut off the heads and hands of mere orators, and nail them to the rostrum. He knew, that though Cicero inculcated the doctrine that arms should yield to the gown, and the laurel to the

the tongue, it was the sword and the axe which, in his time, carried all before it.

Amidst all the turbulence of ambition, so extensive was his capacity, that he found both time and inclination to write two books, addressed to Cicero, on the cool and dispassionate subjects of grammatical analogy. In the dedication he paid Cicero a great compliment, though, if we may judge from his own conduct, it was insincere. He congratulated Cicero on having obtained a laurel more honourable than all military triumph, as it was more glorious to extend the limits of the Roman genius, than of the Roman empire.

Cæsar wrote two books in opposition to Cicero's *Laus Catonis*, in which Cato Uticensis had been celebrated with all the warmth of panegyric. Cæsar considered the praise of Cato a reflection on himself, and published his answer in two orations, to which he gave the name, *Anti-Catones*. The speeches were in the form of accusations before a judge; and I believe they were conducted with temper, for Cæsar praises Cato in the midst of his invective. He was too much master of his temper to suffer it to be indecently disturbed by critical controversy, and he was sufficiently politic to

know, that to deny a merit which was become notorious would injure the cause of which he had undertaken the defence.

One of the principal topics of Cæsar's satire was Cato's inebriety. But he relates an anecdote of it which redounds to the honour of Cato's general character. Cato returning one morning from a convivial meeting in a state of inebriation, was met by some young men, who were determined to see whom they had encountered. They uncovered his face, and found it Cato. They no sooner saw him than they blushed on their own account for having taken such a liberty with so great a man. You would have imagined that they had been detected in an improper state by Cato, and not Cato by them, so great was their confusion. From which it is evident, that in the midst of drunkenness, Cato's character was respectable, and retained the dignity of superior virtue. Cæsar could not have done Cato greater honour, or allowed him more authority, than by relating this story, in which Cato, even when divested of his reason by excess, was yet awful.

I imagine Cæsar, in the liberality and urbanity of a cultivated mind, conducted this controversy in a good humoured manner, and rather more

more for the pleasure and amusement of it, than from a resentful desire to detract from Cato, whom his enemies allowed to be a good man and a good citizen. Every one knows that he was fond of wine; and Horace seems to think that his virtue acquired warmth from the juice of the grape.

*Narratur et prisca Catonis
Sæpe mero caluisse virtus.*

The effect of Cæsar's knowledge in astronomy is felt at this hour in the reformation of the Calendar. Cæsar is represented in Lucan as saying of himself

———media inter prælia semper
Stellarum cœlique plagis superisque vacavi.

He was a lover of the science, and excelled in it; but there is reason to believe that in the Julian Calendar he was assisted or directed by Sosigenes the astronomer, who had derived his knowledge from the Banks of the Nile. It is probable that superstition, and not ignorance only, prevented the reformation from taking place before Cæsar gave it the sanction of his authority, and received in return the honour of the invention.

Cæsar's Commentaries are too well known to admit of much animadversion upon them. They
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are evidently formed on the model of Xenophon's *Anabasis*. Their language is pure, and flows with that ease and perspicuity which has induced readers unanimously to compare it to a gentle and beautiful river, whose surface is smooth, and waters pellucid. They who lament the want of political observations in them, and of masterly strokes of animated eloquence, should remember, that Cæsar professed only to write commentaries, and not a just and legitimate history.

There is not much remaining of this great man's composition * ; but there is enough to induce us to lament that he did not use the pen more than the sword. In military merit, his first object, Poggius maintains, with great force of argument, that he was greatly inferior to Scipio.

Pliny the elder seems to think vigour of mind the distinguishing character of Cæsar. He means not firmness and resolution only ; but

* Besides those already mentioned, Cæsar wrote the following works, which are lost—Nine capital Orations, besides some smaller ones, on particular occasions ; several books of Epistles, at least sixteen ; *Libri Auspiorum*, *Auguralia* ; and some affirm that he translated Aratus's *Phænomena*. Other things are attributed to him, but, it is supposed, erroneously.

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a peculiar celerity and irresistible force, which can be compared to nothing more aptly than to fire. He could, at the same time, read and write, and listen with attention. He has been known to dictate six or seven letters at once to his amanuenses. Who but must lament that ambition stole him from the Muses? He might have spent all his fire in composing an epic poem, or the history of his country, without shedding a drop of blood, or breaking one widow's or orphan's heart; and with the praise and delight of all posterity.

C H A P. XV.

Of the fable books commonly used for the initiation of children in reading—Croxall, Dodgley, &c.

I THINK it may admit of a doubt whether the presenting of the common fables, which are called Æsopian, to young minds, is the most eligible mode of communicating those first ideas which are said to be of the greatest consequence, and of the longest duration.

I object not to the moral, which is excellent, if the child could find it out: but the child thinks of nothing but the narrative, and perhaps, in the childish age, ought to think of nothing else. What has the infant of six or seven years to do with the cunning maxims of the world? The great business is, at that time, to open the mind in the pleasanter manner, by presenting agreeable images, and by exciting and gratifying curiosity.

The images of animals, dogs, horses, bulls, peacocks, are very agreeable to children, and so far fables are proper for their elementary instruction. But the objection is to that shocking violation

violation of truth and nature which represents the irrational and mute creation reasoning and conversing by articulate language.

Quodcunque ostendis mihi sic incredulus odi.

Children naturally love truth, and when they read a story, their first question is, whether it is true? If they find it true, they are pleased with it; if not, they value it but little, and it soon becomes insipid. But they either immediately know that a story, in which a dog or a horse is represented speaking, is false; or if they believe it true, it contradicts their experience, and confounds all their ideas, so that they hardly know how to trust the evidence of their senses.

The reasoning and conversation of irrational animals raises them to a level with the human species; and if children are to respect reason and speech as most excellent gifts, they will honour the cock, the wolf, the fox, as much as man, or else degrade man to the rank of the cock, the wolf, and the fox.

Is zoology a valuable part of knowledge, and confessedly useful and pleasing to children? Then why mislead them in their first ideas of animals around them, by attributing to animals not
only

only speech and reason, but a thousand actions, instincts, and contrivances totally different from those which are natural.

While I am writing, I open Croxall, and I see a print of a cat hanging by the hinder legs, on a peg, and pretending to be dead, in order to entice the mice to come down. A child of strong sense will say, How could a cat tie her hinder legs together in such a manner as to hang herself up as represented, and have cats such refined subtilty? I mention this instance out of a hundred others, merely because I accidentally open the book at that fable. As the cat is an animal with which children are in general well acquainted, any unnatural representation of it, will immediately be detected and despised.

The style and language of all the *Æsopian* fables now in use, is greatly above the comprehension of those by whom alone they are read. Croxall's is at the same time a very mean style. Doddsley's indeed is a far better; but, in search of fine language, he has deviated greatly from simplicity, and rendered his fables unintelligible to those for whom they are chiefly designed.

L'Estrange's vulgarity, indelicacy, and foolish politics deservedly condemn his book to oblivion.

His

His book is a nasty book, and fit only for the jakes. I cannot admire either his or Croxall's applications. They are, indeed, seldom read by children, and serve only to swell the volume. They are too long, and too badly written, to serve for the instruction of young scholars. Two or three lines of application, in the manner of Phædrus, would have answered the purpose far better.

As to the propriety of Croxall's language, that I may not be thought to choose the worst specimens, I will quote three or four lines of his first fable, and leave it to the reader to judge how well it is adapted to children.

"A brisk young cock," says he, "in company with two or three pullets, *his mistresses*, raking upon a dunghill for something to entertain them with, happened to scratch up a jewel. *He knew what it was well enough*," &c. I say nothing of the absurdity of giving children an idea that a cock "knows what a jewel is well enough." I only animadvert on the ordinary mode of expression. It aims at humour without reaching it; and is totally destitute of that elegant simplicity in which a narrative of this kind should be presented to children. It were
easy

easy to fill a volume with the vulgarisms and absurdities of Croxall's Æsopian fables.

But yet, for want of a better, this book, with the help of the wooden cuts, has served to entertain children. All I contend for is, that it is not adapted to the use of children by the author, neither is it fit for them. It is at once too high and too low for their purpose.

Are Gay's fit for children? I think not. They are far above their comprehension. They are not entirely intelligible to children under twelve or fourteen, unless in rare cases of premature improvement and sagacity. But some book is wanted that shall be in general calculated for all children at that period when the mind, like the rosebud, is half closed and half expanded.

Fables are proper; but what fables? Only those among the Æsopian, in which the animals do not speak, and do not act differently from their nature.

But by *fables*, I mean, what the word means, *stories in general*, and not those of Æsop only. Those of Æsop, after all that has been said on the propriety of children's reading them, are fitter
for

for men than children, and were originally addressed to men on momentous occasions. They are extremely difficult to be read by children, so as to derive the instruction from them which their inventors intended to convey in this artful and insinuating mode.

I recommend *fables* of another kind, for the purpose of initiation; *tales* which paint pictures in the imagination, affect the heart, excite laughter, or powerfully interest and indulge curiosity.

If it should be asked, where such are to be found, I cannot immediately answer; but I can say, without hesitation, who could compose them with judgment and genius. The reader will conjecture that I mean that Lady who published some admirable * Lessons and Hymns for Children. Almost every word in those books is judiciously selected, and they are so entertaining, that children read without considering them as a task, just as they should do.

Studio fallente laborem.

A volume of fables, by that Lady, consisting of the best and most rational of the *Æsopian*, and of other entertaining narratives, whether

• Published for Johnson.

with

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with a moral or not, would be a most valuable present to the rising generation. One would almost wish for infancy again, for the pleasure of reading it, and escaping dull lessons in spelling books, dull fables in Croxall, and a hundred other dismal and dreary moralities, which have little other tendency than to make the mind loath the sight of a book, and hate those things which, properly managed, afford an exquisite delight.

C H A P. XVI.

*Miscellaneous Literary Correspondence—Parnell—
Beza—Augurellus—Letters.*

S I R,

I N the preface to Parnell's works, Dr. Johnson professes to criticise those pieces only which were published by Pope. "Of the large *appendages*," says he, "which I find in the last edition, I can only say that I know not whence they came, nor have ever enquired whither they are going. They stand upon the faith of the compilers." A writer of a preface to this very edition should have made it his business to enquire into their authenticity, and if he allowed them to be admitted into the edition to which he prefixed a critical preface, should have allowed them also a share of his criticism. We are thankful to him for what he did, and will not blame him for omission. But he dismisses these *appendages* in a more contemptuous manner than, perhaps, they deserve, and than he ought to have shewn, if he had not read them.

I have taken a cursory view of them, and think they have many fine passages. In the dearth of good sacred poetry, I think Parnell's
worthy

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worthy of regard; but what proof there is of their being genuine I know not, though I think there is internal evidence. The following specimen from the Convert's Love is not unlike the style of Parnell:

While o'er the darkneſs of my mind
The ſacred ſpirit purely ſhined,
And marked and brightened all the way,
Which leads to everlaſting day;
And broke the thickening clouds of ſin,
And fixed the light of love within, &c.

I confeſs he ſometimes deviates into enthuiſaſm, and has left careleſs epithets and lines, which might eaſily be corrected without any eſſential alteration.

Your's, &c.

S I R,

PARNELL's little poem, entitled The Book Worm, is much admired by many readers. I do not ſee much in it. Goldſmith mentions its being taken from Beza; and I have juſt been amuſing myſelf with comparing the copy with the original. Beza ſacrifices a Book-worm to the Muſes.

Sed quæ victima grata? quæ Camænis
Dicata hoſtia; parcite O Camæne

Nava

Nova hæc victima, sed tamen suavis,
Futura arbitror, admodumque grata.

Accede, O *Tinea*! illa quæ pufillo
Ventrem corpore tam geris voracem:

Tenè Pieridum aggredi ministros?

Tenè arrodere tam sacros labores?

Nec factum mihi denega: ecce furti

Tui exempla, tuæ et voracitatis.

Tu fere mihi passerem Catulli,

Tu fere mihi Lesbiam abstulisti. . . .

Quid dicam innumeros benè eruditos

Quorum tu monumenta, tu labores

Isto, pessima, ventre devorasti?

. prodi

Pro tot criminibus datura pœnas

Age, istum jugulo tuo mucronem,

Cruenta excipe—et istum, et istum, et istum.

Vide ut palpitet, ut cruore largo

Aras polluerit profana sacras!

At vos, Pierides, bonæque Musæ,

Nunc gaudete, jacet fera interempta,

Jacet sacrilega illa, quæ solebat

Sacros Pieridum vorare servos.

Hanc vobis tunicam, has dico, Camæna,

Vobis exuvias, ut hinc trophæum

Parnasso in medio locetis, et sit

Hæc inscriptio: De fera interempta.

BEZÆUS spolia hæc opima Musis.

Parnell does not offer the Worm as a sacrifice to the Muses. His design seems not to have the unity of Beza; but it is evidently formed on Beza's model, and there are several lines in it closely translated.

Pope and Parnell, and indeed several poets of that age, were fond of reading and borrowing from the modern Latin poets. It is well known that Pope published an edition of select Latin poems in two volumes. In the second volume is the *Gratiarum Convivium* of Augurellus, whence Parnell borrowed his spirited Anacreontic.

Invitat olim Bacchus ad cœnam suos
Comon, Jocum, Cupidinem.
Discumbit unâ Liber atque Amor ; Jocus
Comosque contra proximè,
Illis decentes subministrant Gratiæ
Grati saporis pocula, &c.

The Latin poets, whom some of our most celebrated writers have imitated, naturally excite a degree of curiosity. Accept the following few particulars respecting Beza and Augurellus.

Theodore Beza, or de Beze, was born at Vezelai in Burgundy, of a good family, on the 24th of June 1519, and died October 13, 1605, at the advanced age of eighty-seven.

He was a powerful champion of Protestantism ; but with that I have no concern at present. I only view him as a Latin poet. I must however remark, that his espousing a party with zeal, and supporting it with abilities, could not but raise many enemies against him ; and he suffered

ferred severely by their rancour. Indeed I believe he gave too much cause for calumny; in his juvenile poems he inserted things which, if they were not the mere wanton effusions of a momentary wicked imagination, ought to condemn him to everlasting infamy. I fear they cannot be extenuated. The papists, on one side, made the most of them. The protestants, on the other, assisted by his own address and abilities in self-defence, palliated or excused them. He afterwards, I have no doubt, became a good man; but still there is a blemish on his character which no sophistry can ever wash away. I dismiss so disagreeable a subject with the apology contained in the preface to the Poems, published by the author at a maturer age, and with a better judgment.

“Intellexit (BEZA) et pro certo compertum habuit, *juvenilia ista sua poemata*, ab adversariis, *non tam in sui*, quam in Dei ipsius odium, *subinde recudi*, et hoc non tantum, sed et *multo indigniora effingi ac addi*. Scripsit illa Beza *liberius quidem* sed *juvenis* admodum. . . . Sed quamprimum Christi cognitione fuisset imbutus, et veræ ecclesiæ civis factus esset, nemo ista prius, nemo severius et quidem publicè quam ipse D. Beza damnavit, et ab eo tempore omnia sua dicta et scripta in solius Redemptoris sui laudem direxit.”

The most celebrated of his Latin poems are the verses on the Birth of Christ, on the Psalms, on Strabo, on Plato, and his Epitaphs. The *Devotio Deciorum*, the Death of Cicero, and most of the Epigrams, display marks of great labour in their composition.

There is much false wit both in the Epigrams and Epitaphs; and the diction is not purely classical in any part of his poems, yet there is ingenuity of thought, and ease of language. I cannot recommend them strongly to the reader's notice; but I have given them a cursory consideration, in order to form an estimate of a writer from whom a famous English poet condescended to borrow without acknowledgment.

Beza's excellence was theological. He was a poet only for amusement; and though he has obtained praise, it would, upon the whole, have been better for his character if he had never written verse.

On account of his longevity and extraordinary abilities, Beza was called the Phoenix of his age.

He embalmed his verses in the Latin language; else I believe they would, by this time, have been utterly decayed. I would quote, but I fear I should be tedious, though the pieces are
short.

short. This epigram may serve to conclude the subject of Beza's poetry :

IN ZOILUM.

Brevem, Zoile, dicis hunc libellum,
O si possit idem omnibus videri !

The only unexceptionable edition of Beza's poetry I can recommend to the young lover of Latin verse is that printed at Geneva from copies corrected and revised by the author. It is badly printed ; but may be depended upon as authentic.

Aurelius Augurellus, the other poet whom Parnell confessedly imitated, flourished in great esteem at Venice, and lived in literary employments to the age of eighty-three.

He was the preceptor of the celebrated Bembus and Naugerius.

He wrote many odes remarkable for their ease, and a few elegies with Roman simplicity ; but he is said to have approached most nearly to the model of antiquity in his Iambics, which, before his time, had seldom been attempted with success.

He was one of the dupes of alchemy. After expending some time, but not much money, in the pursuit, he turned his mind to making verses instead of gold ; and one of his first pro-

ductions was a poem in three books, entitled *Chrysopœia*, or the Art of making Gold, in which he pretended to teach, or prove, the practicability of that alchemy which he had just renounced as impracticable.

He expresses himself darkly on the great secret.
—Speaking of the stone, he says,

——cujus secretâ in parte recessit
Spiritus et crassâ pressus sub mole latenter
Victitat, ac solvi vinclis et carcere cœco
Emitte expectat

He dedicated it to Leo the Tenth, who, though a despiser of gold himself, might have learned hence, if the art had been practicable, how to procure an abundance for the patronage of such genius and taste as those of Augurellus. He published another poem, entitled *Geruntica*. I know nothing of it, nor have I seen any other of his complete pieces but that which Parnell copied, and which is inserted in Pope's collection of Latin poetry.

Your's, &c.

C H A P. XVII.

The Effect of Songs—The Words of Songs usually sung by young Ladies—Union of good Poetry with good Music.

EVERY scholar knows that Bishop Lowth, in a solemn introduction to his Lectures on sacred Poetry, has inserted, in the very first place, and as one of the most striking instances of the power of poetry, a Greek political ballad, which used to be sung by the Athenian liberty-boys, at all their jolly drinking bouts, and by the mob and the ballad singers, in the streets and alleys of the city. The Bishop, after citing it at full length, suggests, that if, after the memorable ides of March, such a song had been given by the *Tyrannicides* of Rome to the common people to be sung in the Suburra and the Forum, it would have been all over with the party and the tyranny of the Cæsars. The ballad, *Harmodion Melos*, would have done more than all the Philippics of Cicero: and yet this ballad, though in Greek, is not better than many an one sung in Cheapside in praise of Wilkes and liberty. It bears a considerable resemblance to several popular songs written by Tom D'Urfey and George Alexander Stevens, whom some future lecturer in poetry may call, (as the Bishop

does Callistratus, the author of his favourite song), *ingeniosos poetas et valde bonos cives*.

That the Bishop should have thought proper to select a trivial ballad to shew the force of poetry, when he was going to treat of inspired poetry, evinces that he deemed ballads capable of producing wonderful effects on the human heart, and therefore of great consequence, and worthy to be ranked with the highest poetry.

I imagine there must have been a favourite tune to these words, which is lost past recovery; for among us a popular tune and popular words are generally united; at least the words will seldom be long popular, without a favourite tune. Words scarcely above nonsense have had a fine effect when recommended by favourite sounds; *Lillabullero* is an obvious instance, and many others might be enumerated. Lord Wharton boasted that he rhymed the King out of the kingdom by it. *Hearts of Oak are our Ships, Hearts of Oak are our Men*, is as good a composition as that of the old Grecian with the hard name, and I dare say has contributed to animate many a poor creature, whose unhappy lot it was to be *food for powder*.——*Hofier's Ghost, the Vicar of Bray*, and *Joy to great Caesar*, had great weight in the times in which they first appeared.

But

But if political songs produce so great an effect, it is but reasonable to conclude, that Bacchanalian and amorous songs have, in their way, an influence similar and no less powerful.

Music and poetry are wonderfully efficacious on the mind when they act separately; and, when united, their power is more than doubled. They are, of necessity, united in songs, and the effect is usually increased by wine, cheerful conversation, and every species of convivial joy.

I argue, then, that if political songs have had such wonderful effects as to lead on armies to conquest, and to dethrone kings, those songs, in which the joys of love and wine are celebrated, must have done great execution in private life. It is fair, I think, to draw such an inference.

I proceed to infer, that it is of great consequence to the cause of temperance, and all other virtues, that the poetry of popular songs should be of a good tendency. For as songs may do great harm, so may they do great good, under certain limitation.

Perhaps we have not improved in song-writing so much as in other species of poetry; for the old songs are still the best, if we judge by that infallible criterion, Popularity.

But such is the love of novelty, that with a new tune there must be a new song ; and, unhappily, the composers of the poetry are less excellent in their art than the composers of the music. The music is often delightful, while the verse is merely rhyme, not only unaccompanied with reason, but destitute of fancy and elegance.

But they who can write neither good sense nor good poetry, can write licentiously, and give to their insipid jingle the high seasoning of indelicate double meanings, or even gross obscenity.

If they descend not to this degradation, they yet represent the passion of love in language, which, though mere common-place, renders it very difficult for ladies of delicacy to sing their songs without the blush of confusion. Nothing is, indeed, more common than to hear young ladies say, " the tune is delightful, but the words are nonsensical. But we never mind the words, we only make use of them to sing the tune, without giving them a moment's attention."

The effects of a song ought to arise conjointly from the music and the poetry. If the words are considered of no consequence, and unworthy of attention, it is evident that much
of

of the pleasure, perhaps half of it, is entirely lost to the singer and the hearer. But though the young lady may apologize for singing nonsense, or warm descriptions of passions which her delicacy must conceal, by saying she does not mind the words, it may be doubted whether it is possible to learn a song by memory, and sing it frequently in company, without giving the words a very considerable degree of attention.

And I think it probable that indelicate songs have done almost as much harm by inflaming the imagination as novels and sentimental letters. I do not speak of songs grossly indecent; for such are certainly never admitted to lie on the young ladies harpsichord; but I speak of those which come out every season at Vauxhall, Ranelagh, and other places of public amusement. The music is charming, and the words are usually well adapted to the mixed audience of those places, but not always so well to the parlour, the dining-room, and ladies library.

I propose to the musical ladies, or rather to the music masters, that whenever a foolish or improper song is set to a pleasing and excellent tune, they would seek some poetical composition of similar metre, and of established reputation, which may be sung to the same tune without any inconvenience, but on the contrary, with great ad-

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vantage to the tune, to the morals, to the taste, and with an addition to the pleasure of all young persons, who are educated with care and delicacy.

Where young ladies have a poetical talent, which is common in this age, I should think they could not employ it more agreeably and usefully than in writing new words to tunes which are accompanied with such as they cannot but disapprove. It would be an additional pleasure to the hearers to have, at the same time, a specimen of the performer's skill in music and in poetry.

I cannot dismiss the subject without expressing a wish that the composers of fashionable songs would take care, for their own sake, that the poetry should be at least inoffensive; for there are many most pleasing pieces of music rejected by respectable families, and consequently soon lost in obscurity, because the words were such as could not be sung without causing some degree of pain or shame. This is not a licentious age in theatrical amusements, nor in song-writing, compared with the reign of the second Charles. But still there is a disguised indecency which prevails in both, and which is probably the more injurious, as the poisoned pill is gilded, as the dagger is braided with a wreath of myrtle.

But,

But, exclusively of moral considerations, every man of taste must wish to see good poetry united with good music.

The best poets of antiquity wrote the popular songs, *Poetae melici et lyrici*. Most of the odes of Horace are love or drinking songs. Anacreon has gained immortality by songs alone. Sappho was a song-writer. Great statesmen, as Solon, for instance, wrote songs for political purposes.

Many of our best poets who have obtained the rank of English classics, wrote songs; but who writes for Vauxhall? The best writers of the age need not think it a degrading condescension, when they consider the dignity of music and poetry, and how far their effects in this country are diffused. *In tenui labor; at tenuis non gloria.*

BOOK THE THIRD.

CHAP. I.

The Deceitfulness of History.

Ornes ea vehementius quam fortassè sentis. Amori
nostro plusculum etiam quam concedet veritas, largiare.

Cicero to Luceius.

Quicquid Græcia mendax
Audet in historia. —

IF you have been an ocular witness to an affray, a fire, or any occurrence in the street, and you see an account of it in all the newspapers next morning, though they should all pretend to accuracy and minuteness, you would find them all vary in some particulars from each other, and from the truth, yet without the least design to contradict or to deceive; but different reporters of the same facts saw them at different times, or in different lights, with various degrees of attention, and reported them with various degrees of fidelity, according to the variety in their powers of memory, or talents in description.

In explaining ancient customs and places, there is every reason to believe that historians are unintentionally deceitful. It is seldom that neighbouring nations can know with accuracy each others

others most familiar actions, sports, diversions, and places of resort, by written accounts. Nothing but ocular observation can secure exactness. I was lately much diverted with an article from the great French Encyclopedie, quoted in the notes to Mr. Mason's English Garden. The word to be explained is Bowling-Green, spelt by the Lexicographers Boulingrin. "Boulingrin is a species of parterre, composed of pieces of divided turf, with borders sloping, (*en glais*), and evergreens at the corners and other parts of it. It is mowed four times a-year to make the turf finer. The invention of this kind of parterre comes from England, as also its name, which is derived from *boule* round, and *grin*, fine grass or turf. Boulingrins are either simple or compound; the simple are all turf without ornament; the compound are cut into compartments of turf, embroidered with knots, mixt with little paths, borders of flowers, yew-trees, and flowering shrubs. Sand also of different colours contributes greatly to their value."

The famous Mr. Sorbier furnishes the following materials for an ecclesiastical historian of England, in his account of his travels among us. He says, "that our chief clergymen, who have pluralities of benefices, make their grooms their curates; that our bishops do horribly abuse their jurisdiction

jurisdiction in their excommunications and impositions; that they are so haughty, that none of the inferior priests dare to speak to them; that they rob the church, by letting its leases for thirty years, getting all the money into their own pockets, and leaving only a small revenue to their successors; that England is a country where no man is afraid of committing simony."

It would be difficult to obtain an exact history of the events of yesterday; how much more of those which happened a hundred or a thousand years ago, and in times when the art of manual writing was not common, and men were prone to transmit to posterity by tradition, the dreams of the night, and the imaginations of their idleness, as a history real and authentic.

Those who wrote in the earlier periods, finding a dearth of materials, from the deficiency of written documents, sought in the powers of invention what they could not find in the archives of their country. A book was to be made, and it was to be entertaining. The *terra incognita* was therefore supplied with woods and mountains according to the will of the geographer. Hence the stories of Pigmies and Cranes, Gynocephali, Astromori, Hippopades, Phannisii, and Troglodytæ.

Herodotus, one of the earliest historians, writes a romance almost as fictitious as Don Quixote

Quixote de la Mancha, but not nearly so ingenious or entertaining; yet he is called the Father of History: he might as justly be called the Father of Lies. The Chaldæan history of Berofus, and the Ægyptian history of Manetho, are but the forgeries of Annius and Viterbo. Sanchoniathon's Phœnician history is equally destitute of credit, if there is any confidence to be placed in the opinions of Scaliger and Dodwell.

Thus the very foundations on which the splendid fabric of history is to be erected are destitute of solidity. But they are usually strong enough to support the superstructure; which is too often but a paper building, a house of cards, pretty and diverting to look at, but of little use and value, when the entertainment it affords is deducted.

It would be a just description of the greater part of histories to say of them, that they are historical romances, founded sometimes on fact, but capriciously narrated according to the historian's prejudices, party, or misrepresentation, and fantastically embellished by the false colours of poetry and rhetoric.

Writers of history are often in a dependent state, and are ready to conceal, or palliate, or exaggerate

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exaggerate any circumstance or transaction, according to the wishes of a party, a powerful nobleman, or a king.

The histories written by different persons of different parties are known to represent the very same things and persons at the same time laudable and execrable, godlike and diabolic.

There is a well-known historical instance of partiality recorded by Polybius, who was himself also extremely partial. Fabius and Philenus wrote the history of the Punic war; Fabius a Roman, and Philenus a Carthaginian. The Roman extolled his countrymen, and blamed the Carthaginians in every thing. The Carthaginian threw all the errors and defects on the Romans, and triumphed in the superiority of Punic valour, wisdom, and generosity. To whom was credit due? Certainly to neither; and have we no modern Fabii or Philenii?

When I am desirous of knowing real facts, I look for them in some chronological table; but I read not a popular history; I peruse such works only when I am desirous of being *entertained* by composition, by the charms of style, eloquence, and poetical painting; or of being amused with observing the influence of party,

or

or religious prejudice, on the mind of the writer and his admirers. The real facts are the clay which the popular historian, like a modeller, forms into various shapes, according to his own taste and inclination. To some of it he gives great beauty not its own ; some he throws away wantonly or artfully, and the rest he shapes into vulgar utensils, or marks with deformity. It is a pleasing pastime to view his work, and men of taste and imagination are much delighted with his ingenuity. Weak and inexperienced persons believe him implicitly ; others find real truth in him nearly in the same proportion as silver is found in a great mass of lead, or pearls in oyster-shells.

So little credit is to be given to historians, even in the recital of facts of public notoriety ! how much less to their delineation of characters, and descriptions of motives for actions, secret counsels and designs, to which none was a witness but the bosom which entertained them ? Yet many historians kindly communicate all. You would think them of the privy council of all nations ; though their intelligence never came from a higher source than the Daily Advertiser.

Your true classical historian finds no difficulties for want of matter. When he finds it not,
he

he makes it. I scarcely need mention those fine speeches in the very best ancient historians, not one syllable of which, except in a few instances, was ever uttered by the personage to whom it is attributed. Truth gives a faint outline; the historian gives shades and colours, drapery, action, and expression. He lays on the red, the orange, the yellow, the blue, the purple, the violet, the black, and the white.

Some writers who have attacked Christianity have relied greatly on the representations of historians of a character remarkably bad both as men and as writers; besides their having laboured under the general imputation of misrepresenting truth, like every other historiographer. Whatever such writers find against the Christian cause in the most contemptible historians, they bring in triumph, and are ready to sing the song of victory, or cry out *eurēka* with Archimedes. But with all their pretensions to philosophy, they act most unphilosophically in giving implicit credit to wretched annalists, paltry tools of paltry princes, who are known to have fabricated a great part of their stories, and who, when they spoke against Christianity, saw it with the eyes of prejudiced heathens, or envious sophists, who could not bear to see a sect flourishing on the ruins of their own wisdom and dominion.

But

But it will be asked, whether what I have said against the credibility of history in general may not be applied to the evangelical history. I answer, that perhaps it might, if the credibility of that history did not chiefly depend on its internal evidence. I never yet saw any external evidence of it which might not admit of controversy ; but the internal proofs have a counterpart in every man's bosom, who will faithfully search for it, which gives it incontestible confirmation. The Evangelists and Apostles were fallible men like other historians ; but the Spirit of God, which operated on them, and now operates on all true Christians, teaches the humble enquirer to find truth there and there only, in a state perfectly pure. We may amuse ourselves with tinsel and paste in mere human compositions ; but gold and jewels are to be dug for in that mine ; and happy they who know how to value them.

I will add one strong internal evidence of the Gospel History from the preliminary observations to Macknight's Harmony.

“ It is remarkable, that through the whole
 “ of their histories, the Evangelists have not
 “ passed one encomium upon Jesus, or upon any
 “ of his friends, nor thrown out one reflection
 “ against his enemies ; although much of both
 “ kinds

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“ kinds might have been, and no doubt would
 “ have been done by them, had they been go-
 “ verned either by a spirit of imposture or en-
 “ thusiasm. Christ’s life is not praised in the
 “ Gospel, his death is not lamented, his friends
 “ are not commended, his enemies are not re-
 “ proached, nor even blamed ; but every thing
 “ is told naked and unadorned, just as it hap-
 “ pened ; and all who read are left to judge, and
 “ make reflections for themselves ; a manner of
 “ writing which the historians never would have
 “ fallen into, had not their minds been under
 “ the guidance of the most sober reason, and
 “ deeply impressed with the dignity, importance,
 “ and truth of their subject.”

There is then no history in the world so artless
 as the evangelical, and none which, from its
 manner, has so great an appearance of veracity.

Though all this is not for a moment ad-
 mitted by the sceptical writer, yet, at the same
 time, every passage against Christianity in ancient
 historians, however suspicious their character, is
 triumphantly cited by him as a full and strong
 and unanswerable proof in favour of infidelity.

C H A P. II.

Of Common-place Wit and Jocularity.

Cui non fit publica vena,
 Qui nihil expositum soleat deducere, nec qui
 Communi feriat carmen triviale monetâ.

Juv.

THE common coin which is constantly in circulation among the lowest of the people, usually contracts a degree of filth, which renders it contemptible to the genteeler and richer orders, many of whom never touch it with their hands, or suffer it to enter their pockets, from a fear of defilement.

There is a common sort of wit also, which, from constant use in the mouths of the vulgar, is become polluted. It is indeed, in its trite state, fit for none but the vulgar, and ought, like dirty halfpence and farthings, to be chiefly confined to their intercourse.

The wit I mean, I distinguish by the name of Common-place Wit. It might have been sheer wit in the days of our grandfathers; but is now, from an alteration in manners and customs, no longer founded on truth and real life.

Respicere exemplar vitæ morumque jubebo.
 Doctum imitatore—

It

It is as obsolete as fardingales, ruffs, and square-toed shoes. It is worn out, quite threadbare, and ought to be consigned to Monmouth-street and Rosemary-lane.

One of the most common topics of commonplace wit, is a jocularly on the lord-mayor and aldermen of London as great eaters, particularly of custard. It might be true formerly that they were addicted to gluttony, and it may be true now that some among them, like other men, have set up an idol in their belly. But gluttony is not now sufficiently confined to them to justify the perpetual jokes on their gormandizing, as if it was their peculiar characteristic. Gentlemen of education and patrimonial fortune have, of late, been elected into the court of aldermen; and there is no more reason to suppose them fonder of eating when become magistrates, than when they continued in a private station. In general there is a refinement in the present age which does not allow men of fortune and rank to place their enjoyment in eating to excess, though it may teach them to indulge the more agreeable luxury of eating with an elegance of palate.

I have known aldermen of singular abstemiousness, who would sit at tables covered with every dainty, and eat moderately of the plainest food;

food; while hungry would-be wits, who were accidentally invited, indulged in excessive gluttony. Yet the would-be wits would laugh with a grin of self-complacency at their entertainers as soon as they were recovered of their own crop-sickness, for giving what they called a truly *aldermanic* feast.

The common council and the city companies are standing topics of jocularities, on account of their achievements with the knife and fork. As it unavoidably happens that some among them are of low and vulgar habits, and of mean minds, as well as of mean origin, a few may be observed to compensate the poorness of their own tables, by gormandizing at a public feast, where dainties are presented which they never tasted before, or where the flavour of every dish is heightened by that fine seasoner, a consciousness that it comes free of cost. This, I say, may be the case in a few instances; but they are not striking enough to justify an everlasting repetition of jokes on the worthy liverymen and common-council of the city of London.

Even if the jokes are well founded, we have now had enough of them, and let us not be overfed in one way while we are ridiculing excess in another.

M

But

But not only the lord-mayor, aldermen, common-council, and livery, but all the natives, and all the inhabitants of London, supply a perennial fountain of jocularities, under the appellation of Cockneys. Your true Cockney, one who never was out of the sound of Bow bell, is uncommon in the present age. No persons ramble more than the citizens, to Bath, Tunbridge, Brighthelmstone, Margate, and all other places of fashionable resort. Perhaps it would be better if there were more Cockneys. Trade would be better minded, there would be less folly, extravagance, and ruin, and the Gazette would not be so crowded with advertisements. But the Cockney was selected as an object of ridicule some hundred years ago; and so he must continue, or else the haberdashers of small wit, and retailers of old jokes, must become bankrupts for want of stock in trade.

The professions, indeed, will supply them with many articles in their way, ready cut and dried.

The clergyman, in the ideas of these humourists, is no less fond of good eating and drinking than the alderman; and why should he be? since both of them are only on a level with

with the rest of mankind in this species of enjoyment, which is natural and necessary, and which, with respect to guilt or innocence, may be deemed a matter of indifference. I imagine that the idea of clergymens eating to excess might arise from the antient custom of keeping chaplains at the table of great men, where they fared sumptuously, and, perhaps, seemed highly delighted, though even then it was expected of them that they should retire as soon as the desert appeared.

But if the joke on the parsons was once a good one, it has now lost all its goodness, because it is stale. The parsons after all may console themselves, if the jokers can say no worse of them, than that they love pudding. A piece of solid pudding, it must be owned, is in itself a far better thing than such witticism, such salt as has lost its flavour.

Those jokes on the clerical profession which relate to formal dress, great wigs, grave faces, long sermons, are now totally unsupported by the manners and fashions which prevail at present in the ecclesiastical world. The race of formal *spintexts* and solemn *saygraces* is nearly extinct.

The lawyers afford an abundance of ready-made jokes for little wits; but the jokes are so old that they cease to please, except among the witty fraternity, or among the vulgar.

The profession of physic is, perhaps, the richest mine of wit, which the witlings are able to find. Tye wigs and gold-headed canes are inexhaustible; but the physicians of the present day wear neither. There is the misfortune. The barren joker procures all his stock from the old stores of deceased witlings of the last century; mere rubbish and lumber, which would be thrown away if it were not bought up and retailed by these second-hand dealers in cast-off trumpery.

The sects, as well as the professions, suggest a great deal of common-place jocularity. Presbyterians and Quakers supply a delectable sort of wit, which comes at easy rate, being attended with no expence of thought, nor labour of invention. But the Presbyterian and Quaker of the last century resemble those of the present but little; and the shaft of ridicule, which might adhere to some of them, would now, in most cases, recoil on the assailant.

National prejudices are another copious fountain of petty wit. A Welshman is no sooner mentioned

mentioned in the society of jokers, than goats, leeks, and red herrings occur to his polite imagination. A Scotchman brings to mind the Scotch fiddle, famine, oatmeal, whiskey, barren land, and want of trees: an Irishman, potatoes, blunders, bulls: a Frenchman, soup meagre, wooden shoes, ruffles without shirts, cowardice; an Englishman, roast beef, honour, honesty, courage, riches, every thing glorious and desirable under the sun.

Many of these vulgar characteristics may have some foundation in truth; but when the same dish is served up with the same sauce from age to age, who can wonder if the appetite for it should fail?

And now I mention dishes, What a feast of ready-dressed wit does a dinner supply? Suppose it a calf's head; then, Pray do you want brains? you have tongue enough already. A hare suggests the witty idea of being hare-brained; a goose is as full of jokes as of sage and onion. The land of *Ham* abounds with salt, and I wish there were a grain of the true Attic in it. If you want sauce, you are saucy enough already.

In harmless converse many levities and follies, which arise from an ebullition of good spirits, and are accompanied with good humour, are not only pardonable, but useful, as they contribute to pass a vacant hour with a charming gaiety of heart. But in composition all common-place wit is insufferable; and yet he who is acquainted with the dramatic writings of the age will recollect, that many comedies, and more farces, depend upon nothing else for their power of affording entertainment. The drollery of comic actors causes them to keep their place on the stage; otherwise it would be impossible to sit at them without yawning or hissing. It would not be difficult to mention both poems and prosaic pieces of a sort of humour, founded entirely on ridicule of the citizen, of the clergyman, the lawyer, the doctor, the Presbyterian, the Quaker, the Welshman, the Scotchman, the Irishman, the Frenchman, and not displaying one idea which is not to be numbered in the list of common places. The humour, in its day, was perhaps good; but it is time to relinquish it when it is grown threadbare; and I advise all would-be wits, who have no other stock in hand but such as I have described, to get rid of their lumber immediately, and set up with as good a capital as they can raise of common sense, recollecting the proverb, that an ounce of good
sense

sense is worth a pound of wit. I will add, that common sense will not only be a more useful, but a more agreeable qualification; for, to people of judgment, nothing is more disgusting than the importunate and impertinent vivacity of a petulant retailer of old fashioned wit and humour.

C H A P. III.

Of the masculine Dress of Ladies.

GORGON, ICON, ET AMAZON!

Propria quæ maribus.

THE Spectator interfered very much in the *mundus muliebris*. I do not know whether he did not condescend too far, in meddling with the affairs of the toilette, considering that he was capable of enlarging on subjects of a kind so much more sublime and important. But trifling as dress is, he recollected what Horace says concerning the tendency of trifles to lead to serious evils, and gave it a very considerable share of his attention. The ladies in his day were not so great readers as in the present; and I always consider his making them and their dress so frequently the subject of his lucubrations an innocent stratagem to draw their attention to his book, and thus to allure them to his noble speculations on moral and divine subjects.

But if he really thought the dress of the ladies of great importance, and had lived in the present age, a great part of his papers must have been devoted to the subject.

I think

I think it is easy to collect, from what he has written, that he would have highly disapproved the masculine dress for which the ladies in our times have displayed a singular predilection.

There is something so lovely in feminine softness and delicacy, when free from affectation, and not caused by sickness or infirmity, that they who endeavour to hide those attractive qualities, by assuming the air and dress of a man, must be considered as ignorantly defeating their own intentions to please. Taste requires a congruity between the internal character and external appearance. The imagination will involuntarily form to itself an idea of such a correspondence; and the lady who appears in a manly dress will at first sight suggest the apprehension of a deficiency of female gentleness and grace. This first idea may be superseded by any one who takes time to consider, that the dress is not the consequence of choice, but merely an innocent compliance with a temporary fashion. Yet as first ideas are in general of considerable consequence, and not always corrected by second, I should think it wise in the female world to take care that their dress, which they evidently study with an intention to render themselves agreeable, should not convey a forbidding idea to the most superficial observer.

Silks, linens, cottons, gauzes, and all the stock of the milliner and haberdasher, which I forbear to name, lest I should only display my ignorance, have a beauty, a delicacy, a softness, characteristic of those whom they were designed to embellish. Broad cloth has a strength and roughness in it, which is of a piece with the manly character. But notwithstanding this evident truth, nothing is more common in the present age than to behold ladies of the utmost elegance dressed in broad cloth externally from top to toe. I do not censure the riding dress, which pleads convenience in palliation of its masculine appearance: but the riding-dress is become lately the walking-dress, and the dress to sit at home in. It has given way to the great coat, the furtout, in which a lady, buttoned up with broad metal buttons, appears much like the footman behind her carriage; and, indeed, when she drives her husband or her lover in his phaeton, she might very easily be mistaken at a distance for the coachman.

“ It is a charming, warm, and comfortable
“ dress, and if the lady and her husband or lover
“ like it, pray what right has any body to object
“ to it ? ”

I believe it may admit of a doubt whether the men, in general, are pleased with it any other-
wife

wife than as it is the fashion; and as they wish their ladies to be in the fashion as much as their coats and carriages, their houses and chattels. There may be a sort of men who have given up their own manly character, and who yet think there should be a certain quantity of it somewhere in the family, and so are not displeased to see it in their partners; but the generality of men, whatever they may assert in polite submission to their ladies, are naturally attached to them for female graces, and must disapprove in their hearts the least assumption of the masculine character.

However, let the broad cloth be confined to the use of travelling or going out of doors, I will only contend that it should not be worn at the fire-side. God and Nature have made the sexes distinct for wise purposes, and let not the taylor confound them. Convenience and warmth may plead for the masculine dress on the journey, but that plea loses its force in the domestic circle.

Is there not reason to apprehend that the habitual dress has an influence on the manners? Is it not likely that she who constantly assumes a manly appearance, and a roughness of garb, should likewise display something similar in her behaviour? And may not her behaviour gra-

dually injure her disposition; so that in time she will not only appear less amiable, but be so? I express myself interrogatively and dubiously, leaving the answers to be made by those who, when they seriously consider, are well able to decide on points like these.

After all, I am far from certain that dress is of so much consequence as the Spectator seems to consider it. It is indubitable that there are excellent and most amiable women who follow the fashion in dress wherever she leads without any apparent evil. Good sense, perhaps, may prevent consequences which would otherwise arise; but aping folly may suffer from things which in themselves appear innocent or indifferent.

After all, much of the severity on singular dress or new fashions, to which our eyes have never been accustomed, arises from narrowness of thinking, and from prejudice. So long as dress answers the purpose of a decent covering, and a warm cloathing, the ornaments of it may, I should think, be safely left to the discretion of the female wearer.

Persons in high life, urged by the impulse of that pride, which is as strong in low life as in high, will be continually endeavouring to distinguish themselves

themselves by external appearance. Those on the next step, quite down to the bottom of the ladder, will always be assuming the appearance of those above them. Fancy and invention are put to the rack to find out new marks unattainable, if possible, by the subordinate classes; and nothing keeps them distinguished so long as something very *outré*, and apparently ugly and absurd. This accounts for very strange deviations from beautiful simplicity.

The deviations, however, encourage trade, and amuse those who have little to do. Let not the satirist therefore vent his spleen on the ladies dress, provided they do not confound the different distinctions of sex by assuming the dress of men. I would forbid, by censorial authority, if I had it, all beaver hats and broad cloth, except to such venerable matrons as time has honoured with a beard.

How much is continually said on the subject of head-dresses! It is unfair in *men*, except friseurs, to interfere in that province. The most elegant women, in the most classical times, adorned their heads with ornaments, which raised them so high as to leave it a matter of doubt whether the head was a part of the body, or the body a part of the head. The dressing of the hair is called by a Roman poet the *Building*
of

of a head, and the English ladies have scarcely yet equalled the Roman edifices, though the painters of caricature have been extremely severe upon them.

Moralists may certainly find better employment than that of censuring modes of ornament, which are the natural effects of *female instinct*, if the old definition of a woman, of which the Spectator is so fond, be a just one, that she is an animal delighting in finery.

C H A P. IV.

Of polite Preaching.

MH ΠΡΟΣ ΧΑΡΙΝ.

BISHOP Saunderson exhibited a very good example, when he addressed his sermons, some to the people, some to the court, some to the clergy, and some to the magistracy—*ad populum, ad aulam, ad clerum, ad magistratum*. All the different descriptions of men included under these appellations require a different style of eloquence, and that which would be persuasive and elegant to one may possibly be to the other impertinent, rude, trite, and wholly inefficacious.

But yet this observation is to be understood with restrictions. There are some general truths which concern all congregations, and there is a plain and perspicuous manner which is well adapted to explain and recommend them to to all.

I have heard that preachers before the polite congregations who assemble in the modern Chapels of Ease (so called with propriety in more senses than one), dwell chiefly, if not entirely

on morality. They endeavour to recommend benevolence in particular, in a neat and smooth style, without any such prominences of oratorical excellence as may disturb the soft tranquillity of the gentle audience.

Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell, convey ideas insufferably unpleasant to refined and elegant people, who loll on the cushions of a chapel gallery, or sit at their ease by the fire. A polite preacher who should very frequently talk of torments, and of a fire of brimstone, with peculiar earnestness, would be in danger of not letting his pews, and might in a short time be under the distressing dilemma either of shutting up shop, or of preaching the Gospel to the poor.

Yet if the doctrines of Christianity are not preached, the chapel, though consecrated by a bishop, is little better than the Porch or Lyceum of the poor Pagans; where folks used to meet to be entertained with fine discourses on subjects which were not intended to influence practice, but merely to display the taste, the language, the elocution of the courtly orator. Such discourses were called demonstrative orations, because they principally aimed at *showing off* the orator.

The

The Devil is under peculiar obligations to the polite preacher; for all mention of him is precluded, at least by name; much more those bold and rude invectives against him, which the old divines, who were not men-pleasers, poured out like a torrent, careless of offending either him or his adherents.

The Mysteries, the Trinity, the Resurrection of the Body, the Passion of our Saviour, and all doctrines not immediately reconcileable to reason, are of a kind, which he who depends upon the pleasure of his audience for voluntary contributions will usually pass over in reverential silence.

Any thing sentimental, tender, affecting, connected with benevolence, he recommends with all the graces of florid language and studied gesture, and these never fail of giving entertainment, which was the object proposed in driving to the chapel door. As charity is a principal and essential duty of Christianity, the preacher, whatever be his motive, is highly commendable for taking every opportunity of enforcing it.

But charity is not the whole of our religion; and, though it will cover a multitude, it will not, it is to be feared, cover all our sins; and
those

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those preachers are highly culpable who, for the sake of pleasing an affected audience with haranguing on a popular and fashionable virtue, neglect to enforce other virtues, which want more recommendation, because they are neither fashionable nor popular.

Is not self denial a Christian virtue greatly insisted on? But what polite preacher dares to recommend it with constancy and authority? He is afraid of denying himself the pleasure of so many coaches at his chapel door every Sunday, and so many fashionable dowagers dozing and nodding with all the grimace of *tonish* life.

We are commanded in the Scripture to unite to our charity temperance, patience, godliness. But these are vulgar, ill-favoured virtues, compared to sympathy, beneficence, and soft sensibility to woe. They may occasionally be recommended in common place arguments, but they cannot, consistently with true pulpit politeness, be enforced by awful sanctions, and the terrors of the Lord.

Indeed some polite places of public resort, under the title of places of worship, seem to be considered as decent lounges for a *conversazione*, when all other public places are shut up by the narrow prejudices of John Bull. They answer well

well enough the old purpose of going to see and to be seen; but then it is absolutely necessary that there should be a polite preacher, that is, one of a decent figure at least, if not handsome in person, a good voice, and not given either to preach long sermons, or to say any thing shocking and frightful. People of fashion do not chuse to have their ears wounded by unwelcome truths; and if they are to be freely told of their faults when they go to church, and to be frightened to death by such words as Hell and Damnation, they will even stay at home and play at cards. Cards have not yet been introduced into certain chapels, but from the loud talking, and total inattention to the business of the place, it may reasonably be expected that a pack will soon be brought in the bag that used to contain the finely gilt red Morocco prayer book. A hand at whist well spread will serve instead of a fan.

Flocks will stray if the shepherd is not vigilant and active. It is true that great gentleness in the shepherd, and great compliance with weakness, are laudable; but there is a degree of both which defeats the whole purpose of preaching, by destroying the respect due to the preacher, and to his word. Whatever the preacher may be in private life, when he stands in the pulpit he is to speak as the Oracles of God, and to rebuke with all authority

thority those who were committed to his charge ; and all who neglect or despise him in his office do it at their peril.

But it may be said, that many who now attend the place of worship would absent themselves if any thing disagreeable passed in their hearing. To consult their taste, to sooth their delicate ears, is only an innocent artifice to draw them to their own good. It is right to please so long as we can also profit ; but if the chief attention is bestowed on pleasing, it seems doubtful whether instruction will not be sacrificed to a capricious, and, perhaps, imaginary pleasure.

Care should certainly be taken not to give unnecessary offence. The most salutary doctrine may be conveyed in elegant and polished language. Even admonition and rebuke may also be given forcibly, yet with an evident tenderness and respect for the persons of those whose conduct may fall under a general reprehension. Indeed, advice will be given in vain, when given without respect and affection : pride is alarmed, and shuts the avenues to the heart.

But there is every reason to fear that the affected preacher, whom I denominate the polite preacher by way of eminence, has no such laudable

able view as that of enticing an unwilling audience to his chapel for their own advantage. Vanity and interest appear to be his motives, powerful motives in most men, but which ought never to predominate in him whose business it is to repress them in others by precept and example.

Old Bishop Latimer was an instance of freedom in preaching, which arose from an honest heart, but perhaps proceeded to a blameable extreme. I do not propose the following passage on the dress of the ladies as a model, but as a curious specimen of his style. The times are so altered that a great deal more delicacy of manner would be necessary to add a due dignity to such freedom, and to prevent its exciting derision.

“ There was many a jolly damsell at that time
 “ in Bethlem, yet amongst them all there was
 “ not one found that would humble her selfe so
 “ much, as once to goe see poore Mary in the
 “ stable, and to comfort her. No no, they
 “ were too fine to take so much paines. I war-
 “ rant you they had their bracelets, and ver-
 “ dingals, and were trimmed with all manner
 “ of fine and costly rayment, like as there be
 “ many now adayes amongst us, which studie
 “ nothing

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“ nothing else but how they may devise fine
 “ rayment, and in the meane season, they suffer
 “ poore Mary to lye in the stable, that is to say,
 “ the poore people of God they suffer to perish
 “ for lacke of necessaries.

“ But what was her swadling cloathes where-
 “ in she layde the King of heaven and earth?
 “ no doubt it was poore geare, peradventure it
 “ was her kercher which she tooke from her
 “ head, or such like geare, for I thinke Mary
 “ had not much fine linnen, she was not trim-
 “ med up as our women be now adayes. I
 “ thinke indeed Mary had never a vardingal,
 “ for she used no such superfluties as our fine
 “ damfels doe now adayes: for in the old time,
 “ women were content with honest and single
 “ garments. Now they have found out these
 “ roundabouts, they were not invented then, the
 “ devil was not so cunning to make such geare,
 “ he found it out afterward. Therefore Mary
 “ had it not. I will say this, and yet not judge
 “ other folkes hearts, but onely speake after
 “ dayly appearance and experience, no doubt it
 “ is nothing but a token of pride to weare such
 “ vardingals, and therefore I thinke that every
 “ godly woman should set them aside. It was
 “ not for nought that St. Paul advertised all
 “ women to give a good example of sadnesse,
 “ sobernesse,

“ sobernesse, and godlinesse in setting aside all
 “ wantonnesse and pride. And hee speak-
 “ eth of such manner of pride as was used
 “ in his time: *non tortis crinibus*, not with lay-
 “ ing out the haire artificially; *non plicatura ca-
 “ pillorum*, not with laying out the tusslockes. I
 “ doubt not but if vardingals had beene used at
 “ that time, St. Paul would have spoken against
 “ them too, like as he spake against other things
 “ which women used at that time to shew their
 “ wantonnesse and foolishnesse. Therefore, as I
 “ said before, seeing that God abhorreth all
 “ pride, and vardingals are nothing else but an
 “ instrument of pride, I would wish that women
 “ would follow the counsell of St. Paul, and
 “ set aside such gorgeous apparell, and rather
 “ study to please God, than to set their minde
 “ upon pride; or else, when they will not fol-
 “ low the counsel of St. Paul, let them scrape
 “ out those words wherewith he forbiddeth them
 “ their proudnesse, otherwise the words of St.
 “ Paul will condemn them at the last day. I say
 “ no more, wise folkes will doe wisely, the
 “ words of St. Paul are not written for no-
 “ thing, if they will doe after his mind, they
 “ must set aside their foolish vardingalls; but if
 “ they will goe forward in their foolishnesse and
 “ pride, the reward which they shall have at the
 “ end, shall not be taken from them.

“ Here

“ Here is a question to be moved, who fetched
 “ water to wash the child after it was borne
 “ into the world, and who made a fire? It is
 “ like that Joseph himself did such things, for,
 “ as I told you before, those fine damsels thought
 “ great scorn to doe any such thing unto Mary,
 “ notwithstanding that she had brought into the
 “ world the Lord over heaven and earth.”

If a preacher in the modern chapels should dare, with the freedom of Latimer, to preach against artificial hips, rumps, and other contrivances, similar to *vardingals* in their effects, in swelling both the outer and inner man, he might as well shut up the chapel doors, and stick up a paper announcing a shop to be let. Haberdashers, mercers, milleners, must dress well, and carry a silver tongue in their mouths, if they wish to attract or detain customers, and polite preachers may learn a lesson from the counters on Ludgate-hill. On the other hand, the dealers in silks and sattins might adopt some good hints in the art of pleasing, from prigs in pulpits.—I not only hope, but believe, that the number of such is small compared with the grave, the devout, the unaffected part of the clergy; but few as they are, they disgrace the cause which they ought to support; and as they are not apt to listen to argument, it is fair and right to attack their levity with the weapons of ridicule.

CHAP. V.

Of Indifferentism in Religion.

IN early ages, and long before the prevalence of Christianity, we find men enlisting themselves under philosophical leaders, and warmly espousing the opinions of some favourite sect, which professed the pursuit of wisdom. To be totally indifferent on the principles of thinking and acting was considered as a proof either of stupidity and profligacy, or of a thoughtless and Plebeian ignorance.

But the number of those who profess themselves entirely indifferent concerning the religion of their country, is, in modern ages, very considerable. Such a profession is, however, dangerous to themselves, pernicious in the example, and utterly indefensible.

Are happiness, right conduct, and reasonable opinions of so little importance, as to excite less earnestness than is caused by the temporary concerns of commerce, of politics, of study, of dress, of graceful behaviour, of a thousand pursuits and occupations, in which the greatest eagerness and ardour are usually displayed?

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Man

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Man depends every moment on the favour of a Being who can either deprive him of life instantaneously, or render it, if continued, a torment and a burden. And shall he be totally unconcerned? What is this but to sit securely with a sword over his head suspended by a single hair? to sleep when the house is in flames, to shut the eyes when rapidly travelling on the brink of a precipice?

Such are the dangers of life, such its evils, and such its brevity, that no man of sense, who is not lulled by habitual indolence, or rendered insensible by habitual vice, can suffer himself to sit down totally unconcerned on the subject of religion.

Yet wherever we turn our eyes we see many amusing themselves with any thing which occurs, without any apparent disturbance, from the fear of God, the consciousness of sin, the apprehension of death or of calamity. Is this philosophy? It has no pretensions to it; or, if it has, it is to a philosophy compounded of madness and folly. It is a disease which deserves the pity of every true Christian, and ought in charity to excite his endeavours in its removal.

The

The terrors of the Lord, as they are beautifully termed in scripture, might be set in array to alarm the imagination. But I chuse rather to address the reason in the calm language of common sense.

Think then, O thou that boastest of thy indifference, and thou that livest carelessly, that thy life, the only time allowed thee for religious duty, is every hour losing something of its allotted duration. Thy sands are running fast away; and thy everlasting happiness may depend on thy conduct in the short space that remains of life.

In this brief existence, thou art obnoxious to many infirmities and many evils. But religion offers comforts under them, and a future happiness capable of affording a most abundant compensation, both for the evils and the brevity of this life. I ask thee, therefore, as a man of sense, acting upon principles of worldly wisdom, that is, upon principles which lead thee to act that part which is the most conducive to *thy own interest*, whether thou oughtest to be **INDIFFERENT**, in thy dependent circumstances, to the advantages which religion proposes. If there is but a chance that they are real, thou actest the part of a weak and injudicious man to renounce them. Thou canst

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never prove that they are merely imaginary; and whether thou believest or not, their nature is the same, and the consequences of their truth will remain unchanged by thy denial. Weigh these things seriously in thy mind, and the result will be a full conviction that indifference in matters of such moment is deplorable folly.

I might easily make use of much argument, and much declamation on the subject; but I rather chuse to submit to thee these serious considerations, not doubting but the conviction arising from thy own reflections will be more durable and efficacious than any which might be produced by a formal address to thy reason, thy passions, or thy imagination.

C H A P. VI.

Of nominal Christians.

TO assure a man who displays a total indifference for Christianity that he is not a Christian, would be to give him great offence. He was born in a Christian country, of Christian parents, and baptized in his infancy; he concludes himself therefore a Christian. He would perhaps bring an action at law against you for defamation, if you should deny it, and would prove his faith in Westminster Hall.

But if, in the incorrectness of common language, he should be allowed to retain the name, yet, in the strictness of truth, he must be acknowledged to have no just title to it.

This nominal Christianity may answer the secular purpose of preserving a decency of character, so as to give no open offence to those who are religiously disposed, to those who, in the language of the unbeliever, are weak enough to be enthralled by the superstition of their national religion.

But it can promote no other purposes but those of the world. It must be offensive to the

Supreme Being, who is represented as jealous of his honour. It is indeed a species of hypocrisy, though not usually stigmatized with the appellation.

As no man can penetrate the heart, it may be rash to affirm that the greater part of nations professing Christianity are nominal Christians; but, at the same time, it would be voluntary blindness not to observe that their external conduct and their conversation are such as to render the truth of their profession equivocal.

But if Christianity be true, and I proceed upon that postulatium, the state of nominal Christians is certainly dangerous; and it becomes every believer to use his best endeavours, from motives of charity, to convince them of it.

How would you value a nominal friend? Mr. Such-an-one calls himself your friend, but will he assist you with his purse, or his time and company, if you are in distress? No; he is otherwise engaged; but he is your friend, he has a great regard for you, if you will believe him. But will you believe him? will you value him?

In what light then must our Saviour, I appeal to your own feelings, view a nominal Christian?

C H A P. VII.

Of those Christians who have been called rational, from their Endeavour to reconcile all the Doctrines of Christianity to human Reason.

A RATIONAL Christian seems at first sight to be a most laudable character; but as many of the doctrines of Christianity are above reason, he who compells them all to undergo the examination of reason, and determines by art and sophistry to explain them according to reason alone, will be found, even when he boasts of the powers of his own reason, and of reason in general, to act most irrationally. He brings to the jurisdiction of reason that which is superior to it; just as if a judge were brought to be tried before a justice of peace, or a king before a constable. The touchstone on which the gold is tried by him possesses not qualities of discrimination sufficiently efficacious to decide with certainty.

The distinction between things above and things contrary to reason, though commonly made by divines, is not sufficiently attended to in common life.

That is above reason, the manner of whose being we cannot comprehend or perceive.

That is contrary to reason, which we can comprehend or perceive to be impossible.

But the rational Christian either rejects whatever he cannot understand, or explains it by the assistance of sophistical subtlety, so as to account for, in his own imagination, what is confessedly mysterious, and never intended to be submitted to a judge, so weak, so fallible, so utterly incompetent as human reason.

The practice of explaining away not only the speculative but the moral doctrines of Christianity is too prevalent. Cunning, ingenuity, subtlety, sophistry, can find something to be said in defence of interpretations the most remote from the true, and in the solution of every difficulty. Thus Christianity is made to bend, like a leaden rule, to the prejudices, the follies, and even the vices of those who, fearing to be Christians indeed, fear also to be stigmatized as unbelievers, and therefore exercise their ingenuity in accommodating the system to themselves, which they think too difficult to be received without the liberty of understanding it just as they are inclined.

In reading the Scriptures, even in the plainest and least doubtful parts, this they say is figurative,

tive, this was local, this nationally applied to the Jews, this concerned the times in which it was written but not the present, this was said merely as a menace, *in terrorem*, to secure obedience, or make profelytes, this must be an interpolation, this is inconsistent with God's goodness or justice, and therefore can never be understood as the words seem to imply.

Thus Christianity becomes just what each thinks proper to make it. It is no longer a law, since those whom it ought to regulate and govern cause it to submit to their capricious interpretation.

If this kind of rational interpretation be acceptable in the eye of heaven, it is easy for those who have nothing of Christianity, as it appears in the Gospel, to obtain the rewards promised to the true Christian. But the truth is, it is all self-deception. He is not a Christian, whatever he may suppose, who explains away the most essential doctrines of Christianity, because to his intellect they are unintelligible. There are many things in the Gospel above reason ; and he who is determined to bring them to the test of his reason, and at all events to submit them to it, may indeed be a subtle logician or metaphysician in

the schools of fyllogistic dispute, but he is not a proficient in the school of Jesus Christ.

The best lesson such an one can learn is humility. Let him modestly distrust his faculty, which is really not to be depended on in many of the commonest things in common life.

I will use a familiar example:—I see it rain in the midst of harvest time. I see the grain, which might afford sustenance to the hungry, perishing by the long continuance of a rainy season. If I apply to my reason on the subject, I might argue thus: This rain does infinite mischief just at this time. It is not wanted for vegetation, and it destroys, or greatly injures the fruits of much labour and long expectation, to the distress of the poor, and with detriment to the health and wealth of the people. The Being, therefore, who disposes all events, must be malevolent, careless, or unwise.

My reason might carry me to this false conclusion, though, at the same time, I am convinced, in opposition to my reason, and firmly believe, at the very moment while I am reasoning, that this Being is both provident and wise in the highest degree, and that all partial evil under his direction tends to general good.

In

In ten thousand other instances my reason would lead me to conclusions so evidently false, that I need but see and feel to perceive their palpable falsehood.

I will add another obvious instance:—I tell a plain farmer of excellent common sense, but at the same time ignorant of Science, that there are Antipodes, or persons on the globe whose feet are diametrically opposite to ours. He will not believe it. He reasons, from what he observes on this side the globe, that all bodies fall downwards; and concludes, that men, placed as the Antipodes are represented, would fall head foremost into the sky. From the conclusions of his own reason he disbelieves, unless he has *faith* in me, the existence of Antipodes; he disbelieves it as firmly as any infidel can disbelieve the most difficult doctrine of the Holy Scriptures.

If he had never seen an air balloon, he would with equal confidence deny the possibility of any man's ascending above the clouds.

A thousand phænomena of nature, and productions of art, are equally unaccountable to human reason, and would be denied to exist by those who never had ocular demonstration of their existence.

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In chemistry what wonderful changes are produced! Would not men *reasoning* only, and not feeling experimentally, deny that many of the forms in which quicksilver appears, were produced from that shining liquid metal? Is the resurrection more puzzling to reason than the production of calomel from fluid mercury?

They are little minded philosophers who, after such reflections, can deny, on the strength of their reason alone, the possibility of the resurrection, and of the other wonderful doctrines of Jesus Christ.

C H A P. VIII.

Of voluntary Ignorance of Christianity, its real Nature, Causes, and Tendency.

LIFE, Death, and Immortality! Ideas so momentous to man, it might be supposed, would, of themselves, attract his closest attention; but, it appears that many are more desirous of acquiring any kind of knowledge than that which relates to the truths of revelation.

You shall find men admirably skilled in arts and sciences, ingenious and refined in writing and conversation, versed in business, and capable of conducting the most important and complicated affairs of the world, who, though they call themselves Christians, and behave, in many respects, consistently with that character, are yet little acquainted with the Scriptures, and very superficially informed concerning the real nature of Christianity.

I do not think it necessary that every Christian should be a learned theologian. A man may be *wise unto salvation* with very little knowledge; but it is certainly right that all who have leisure to make any enquiries on intellectual subjects, should

should bestow some portion of their time on the study of the religion which they profess. Indeed, if they do not, it may be suspected that they are either insincere or not sufficiently solicitous, on a subject of highest moment.

Without judgment indeed in the selection of religious books, there is certainly danger that reading in divinity may lead to error, and even scepticism; but no one who seeks will want a guide in making the selection. Good sense, conducted by the information of public fame, will usually point out the proper books with great propriety: but I should be guilty of a culpable omission if I did not recommend an attention to the Bishop of Llandaff's Theological Tracts, and to the catalogue of books which he has affixed to the last volume.

The world is full of most excellent books on every subject of divinity; and he who will not, in the present times, understand his religion, may be said voluntarily to close his eyes while the sun is shining in meridian splendour.

It may be justly suspected, that of those who have rejected or opposed Christianity, few understood it; few studied it with the attention which they would bestow on the title deeds of a freehold estate.

C H A P. IX.

Of the Causes which encrease the Prevalence of Infidelity and Indifference.

MAN has so natural a tendency to religion, that few would be irreligious without the intervention of circumstances produced by pride and wickedness, and operating against the natural sentiments of the human mind. The prevalence of vice, at an early age, conduces greatly to the diffusion of infidelity; for when a young man has lost his innocence, and the satisfaction of a quiet conscience, he is much disposed to listen to any doctrine which allows him to be easy and vicious at the same time. He admits doubts and scruples in this case, which he would otherwise reject and refute.

But it seems to be acknowledged, that young men, in the present age, are earlier admitted into the world, or introduced into life, as it is called, than at any former period. Imagining themselves men, before they have reached maturity of judgment, they fall into vices, which, they think, give them a manly appearance. The next step is to *justify* themselves, if possible; and

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and this is done by renouncing, or doubting the truth of Christianity.

In accomplishing this purpose, they will never be at a loss, as books abound well calculated to diffuse infidelity, by presenting it under the veil of wit and elegance.

Writers, possessed of ingenuity and taste, but, unfortunately, destitute of sound wisdom and of goodness of heart, have, in modern times, remarkably abounded; and as, from the agreeable dress in which their sophistry appears, they amuse and entertain, it is no wonder that they have gained a numerous train of readers, admirers, and votaries. Their writings are particularly addressed to the rising generation; and what, therefore, can be expected, in process of time, but a deluge of infidelity?

It is particularly unfortunate, that those who read the writings of the modern philosophers, seldom inspect those of solid divines; that they are disgusted with the dulness and the gravity of the style and subjects of those who, despising tinsel and paint, have laboured only to procure the substance and solidity of truth.

Add

Add to this, that a religious education among young men of fortune and fashion is become uncommon. There prevails an idea, that to teach young men the principles of religion according to the ideas of their grandfathers, is to confine them unfairly in the trammels of superstition, to render their minds narrow and contracted, and to preclude an attention to things at that age far more in character, and far more useful.

I have seen many parents anxious on the subject of their children's education. They would spare no expence for the acquisition of language, dancing, fencing, music, and every attainment which can render their sons agreeable in company, and skilful in a profession. They wished to see them qualified as orators, and *all-accomplished* as fine gentlemen, but they have displayed no remarkable sollicitude on the attainment of religious ideas, and have even expressed a desire that religion might be postponed to a maturer period. They have not indeed objected to a few formalities, such as a regular and decent attendance at a church, or the learning of a short catechism; but they have not seriously and anxiously laboured the point like those who were cordially anxious that it might be pursued with ardour and success.

But

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But the example of indifference in religion, exhibited by a parent, must always militate strongly against all that is taught in a school or by a private preceptor.

Whoever is acquainted with the manners of our ancestors will acknowledge, that more regard was formerly paid to the religious instruction of children, of high as well as of the middle and lower ranks, than in the present times. Example, parental example, did more than the best instruction alone can ever effect.

The general omission of family devotion has contributed as much as any cause to the diffusion of an indifference to all religious concerns. The houses of our nobility have chapels in them, and service used to be performed there regularly; but how few retain the practice? The example had a salutary influence on the subordinate ranks, when almost all families of respectable character were observed to preserve family worship with pious constancy. Fashionable amusements and dissipation have now scarcely left time for it, even if the tendencies remained undiminished, which it were an excess of candour to suppose. The consequence is, that not only masters and mistresses of families, but the children and domestic servants, live from day to day without

out being reminded of their great benefactor, and without being warned of the approach of death, and all the evils to which man is exposed.

The assembling at church is also neglected as a necessary consequence of encreasing indifference ; or if an attendance is kept up, it is often more in compliance with custom and decency, than from the warm impulse of a voluntary devotion.

Religious books, both doctrinal and practical, abound, but who will spend his leisure hours in reading them, when he is not duly impressed with the importance of the subjects, and when he is more powerfully solicited by novels and seducing publications, which flatter his vices, and by pleasing corrupt his imagination.

From all these causes it happens that infidelity, or an indifference scarcely less culpable and pernicious, encreases more and more ; and the inference which the clergy and all sincere Christians must draw is, that there is a necessity for peculiar exertion to stem the torrent. But who is able to succeed in so vast an enterprize ! The consolation is, that each acquits his own conscience, by exerting himself to the best of his power, and that the blessing of God frequently gives success to causes apparently inadequate.

C H A P. X.

Every Man is interested in Theology.

Felicitatem philosophi quærunt, theologi inveniunt,
soli religiosi possident.

EVERY superficial talker is ready to object prejudice against the serious professors of religion. But can there be any prejudice equal to that of him who considers theology as a matter foreign to himself, fit only for bigotted and superannuated devotees, and for those who, from their office and profession, find it a source of lucre? Such an opinion is equally narrow and malignant, and as unphilosophical as irreligious.

Theology is every man's concern, and it is his duty to study it according to his abilities and opportunities. If we are all the sons of one father, and all bound to do his will, it is certainly the duty of all to endeavour to discover it. As all regard their happiness, it is incumbent on all to seek to please him in whom is the sole disposal of good and evil. And though a religion is *revealed*, yet it requires the attention of its professors to be able to receive the revelation according to the will of the bestower of it. And what is this at-
tention

tention but the study of theology? Let it not be confined to the cloisters of monks, or to the sacred profession alone, since it is every man's most important business to know as much of it as he can; to study it amidst his secular employments, and to seek consolation from it in adversity, and security in the most prosperous state.

It will be readily allowed that every man, the Jew and Turk as well as Christian, is concerned in what is called *practical* divinity, by which little more is understood than moral practice. With such divinity a man may be a heathen, and yet a *practical divine*. A great part of practical ethics he may certainly learn without hearing of Christianity.

But I urge, that it is incumbent on every man to know something of his religion *speculatively* as well as practically. I do not mean that he should enter into controversial points. A little learning of this kind is a dangerous thing. *It puffeth up, and destroyeth charity.* It commonly leads also to doubt, and ends in licentious infidelity. But if he reads and reflects at all, will he not, as a man pretending to reason, read and reflect on that which claims to be of the first importance? on that which gives a peace which the world cannot give in this state, and in the next, life everlasting? Weigh these things duly, and

let not the words pass over without notice or effect from the frequency of their occurrence.

People of fortune and condition are anxious to improve their sons in all fashionable accomplishments, and are desirous that they should be learned in such arts as tend to their advancement in life. The law is studied with uncommon ardour as opening a road to the highest honours in civil life; but as to divinity, says Sir Phaeton Hunter, leave that, Tom, to the Parsons.

But both Sir Phaeton and Tom are as much concerned in divinity as the parsons, so far as relates to their spiritual state. But, exclaims the man of fashion and pleasure, it seems nonsense; I have no relish for these things. But why? Because you understand them not, and because you have never given your mind to the consideration of them. It is an old saying, *Ignoti nulla cupido*, there can be no wish for that of which we know nothing. The concerns of the man of pleasure, which he considers of so much importance, his politics, his wit, his gaming, appear nonsensical to the plain country man, who understands them not, but who is wise, like Horace's Ofellus, without rule, *abnormis sapiens*, wise by the dictates of common sense, and illuminated by the light which God has placed in his bosom, and by the sun of Gospel revelation.

Many

Many others who pretend to wisdom and philosophy will study every thing but theology. They will digest Newton; but never think of Him who made both Newton and the orbs whose path he pointed out, and whose motions he explained.

CHAP. XI.

Of Bishop Wilson and his Works.

Sanctus haberi !

Juv.

IF one were desired to exhibit to sceptics or infidels a specimen of human excellence produced by the influence of Christianity, I know not whether it would be easy to find a more finished model than Bishop Wilson. His whole life appears to have been an uniform tenor of goodness, unequalled and unrivalled by any of the philosophers who are the pride of antiquity, and who are cited as instances by modern sophists when they wish to extol reason and depreciate revelation.

His piety, charity, diligence, and vigilance, were truly apostolic ; and I make no doubt but that he deserved to be canonized better than many of the holiest saints in the calendar, the marble steps before whose shrines are worn by the knees of adoring pilgrims.

He rendered the beauty of holiness eminently conspicuous ; and I think no man of sensibility can read his life without being charmed with the
lovely

lovely picture. Indeed he must be confirmed in wickedness to a most deplorable degree if he does not find his heart meliorated by it. Such a life, since example is confessedly more efficacious than precept, might possibly convert the wicked and unbelieving from their errors more certainly and expeditiously than any oral or written instruction. I recommend it to the attention of all, as likely to promote their Christian improvement more effectually than any other piece of biography which I can at present recollect. Many great divines have adorned this country by their lives, no less than their learning, but there have been few who have not devoted a considerable portion of their time and abilities to mere erudition, to controversy, or to politics; but Bishop Wilson was entirely a Christian, aspiring at no honour or happiness but that which arose from the diffusion of good, and the performance of his duty as the servant of Jesus Christ.

There is no doubt but that he could have written with an ostentation of learning, and in a style adapted to the taste of refined hearers; but he was superior to the arts of seeking human applause, and nobly relinquished all claim to elegance for the sake of simplifying his writings, and adapting them to the understandings of those to whom they were immediately addressed. This instance of generous condescension argues unquestionable

questionable sincerity, and reflects greater honour on a Christian bishop than any fame which could have been obtained by laboriously emulating the graces of a Pagan eloquence.

Though his sermons have none of the rhetorical graces, they are yet eloquent, for they are persuasive: and they are persuasive, because the character of the writer is such as gives them the stamp of truth, the greatest charm in the composition of sermons. It reflected honour on the ancient rhetoricians, that, as a primary requisite to successful oratory, they required the orator to be a good man. They knew that an esteem of the orator has more weight in the mind of a thinking hearer, than any ingenuity of argument, which an hypocrite is often as well able to invent and utter as an honest man. They knew that the best arguments would avail little from the tongue of him who was known to have no principle, and consequently who was ready to defend or recommend any thing which the exigency required, in opposition to truth and to his own conviction. They therefore laid peculiar stress on the moral qualification of unaffected goodness in the accomplished orator. A poor composition with this quality in the orator, would tend more to produce persuasion, or conviction, than the finest words and sentiments

ments which were ever combined without it; and it is to the goodness of Bishop Wilfon's life that his plain discourses are principally indebted for their power over the hearer and reader.

I must acknowledge that they display no marks of genius either in the expression or invention, and that nothing would enable them to produce a powerful effect over a learned and elegant audience but the appearance of sincerity. At the same time I think them judiciously adapted to the use of those who, for want of other opportunities, stand most in need of instruction from the pulpit, the plain Christians who compose the majority of a rural congregation.

The goodness of his heart gives indeed the chief recommendation to all his works; though at the same time, it must be allowed, that perspicuity and plainness are beauties not always so easy as they appear to be, not only because it requires some effort to express ideas so as to be perfectly intelligible to the meanest intellect, but also because it is difficult to repress that pride of heart which leads to a contempt of whatever is familiar, and an affectation of abstruseness and sublimity; difficult to restrain that self love which leads the preacher and writer rather to display his

own taste, learning, or acuteness, than to labour faithfully in the improvement of his disciples.

The Instruction for the Indians, and the little treatise on the Lord's Supper, have done more good in the world than the finest compositions formed in the schools of eloquence. How little is the merit of pleasing the imagination and taste, compared to that of purifying the heart, and rendering that temple of the Holy Spirit fit for his reception.

If there were many instances of Christian perfection equally conspicuous with Dr. Wilson's, I believe, the amiableness of their appearance would make many profelytes to the Christian faith, and do more to engage the careless and the sceptical than the most laboured argumentation. Providence raises from time to time such examples of human excellence, and causes them to shine like lights in the firmament; and happy they who are favoured with grace to assist them in following the guidance. Happy they who feel comfort from such plain books of piety as those of Bishop Wilson, and whose devotional taste finds a pleasure where their classical taste can receive no gratification. Happy they who catch the pure and gentle flame of such a man's devotion, and imitate him in piety to God and beneficence to man.

Greatly

Greatly as I esteem the good bishop, I cannot bestow a general panegyric on him, as if I approved his errors, for errors he had; and was he not a man? I think his favourite topic of inflicting the punishments of ecclesiastical discipline, in frequent and common cases, argues something of an intemperate zeal, and of a severity rather wonderful in a man of his exemplary benevolence. He appears to me to be mistaken in this point, whether I consider the subject of penance in a political or a Christian light. Tyranny will never encrease the number of converts in a free country; and men will readily desert a church where the mere infirmities of human nature may expose them to great suffering and public infamy; and I believe it will be difficult to point out any passage in the gospel that will justify the severity of ecclesiastical punishment; but the bishop meant well, and was, I believe, free from any evil passion, when he strenuously recommended the infliction of penance. His error was in his judgment, not in his heart; for I believe his heart was incapable of error, if it is possible to be so in the present state of human nature.

C H A P. XII.

Of saying Grace—Antiquity of some religious Ceremonies at Table—Decency, propriety of them.

Reverentia mensæ.

Juv.

S I R,

I AM an old man, and have resided in a village above a hundred miles from London during the last forty years; but I was lately tempted, partly by curiosity and partly by business, to spend a month at Christmas with an old friend at the west end of the town. I was very much pleased with many improvements which I observed, and as I am not morose, I think I was not inclined to be querulous at any thing without cause. But there is one thing which gave me much offence, and I dare say you will allow that it is unjustifiable. I observed that the good old practice of begging a blessing on the refreshment of a dinner, and returning thanks for it to Him who is the author and giver of all good, was become unfashionable.

I have been laughed at more than once at some very elegant tables to which my friend introduced me, for standing up and expecting the
master

master to say grace both before and after meat. I found it impossible to continue the practice at another man's house, with a whole circle around ready to stare with surprize, or laugh with scorn. I was therefore contented with a silent ejaculation ; but though I conformed outwardly to the canons of fashion, I entered a secret protest against it then, and beg leave through your means to make my protest public.

Give me leave to inform those polite gentlemen, who have dropped the practice with an idea of its being superstitious, vulgar, puritanical, that a consecration of the table was observed religiously by the politest nations of antiquity.

The ancient Greeks esteemed the table **HIERON CHREMA**, or a sacred thing ; and Cleodemus, in Plutarch, calls it the **ALTAR OF FRIENDSHIP AND HOSPITALITY**.

The first offerings they made to the gods, and called them *απαρχαι*, or first fruits ; and at the conclusion of the feast they poured out *σπονδαὶ* or *λοιβαὶ*, libations of wine.

They were unwilling to partake of the meal till a part of the provision had been offered to the gods, in order to sanctify the whole. Even

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Achilles, whose impetuous spirit was not prone to the weakness of superstition, would not eat when the embassadors of Agamemnon disturbed him at midnight, till he had ordered his friend to make the oblation.

Θεοῖσι δὲ θύσαι ἀνωγει
Πάτροκλον ὃν ἑταῖρον, ὃ δ' ἐν πυρὶ βάλλε θυλάας.

Ulysses also, as Dr. Potter observes from Athenæus, when in the den of Polyphemus, did not neglect this duty of pious gratitude.

Ενθάδε πῦρ καιοῖτες ἐθύσαμεν ἡδὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ
Τυφῶν αἰνύμενοι Φάγομεν.

Dr. Potter adds, that “ in the entertainments of Plato * and Xenophon we find oblations made ; and to forbear the mention of more examples, the neglect of this duty was accounted a very great impiety, which none but Epicurus and those who worshipped no gods at all, would be guilty of,” *apud Epicurum* ἡ σπονδὴ, οὐδ' ἀπαρχὴ τοῖς θεοῖς.

I do not see any reason why those who, like Epicurus, refuse to honour God according to

* Μετὰ γὰρ τὸ διπνήσαι σπονδὰς τί φησὶν ποιῆσαι, καὶ τὸν θεὸν παινήσαντας τοῖς νομιζομένοις γέρασι. Athenæus, lib. 4. Casaub. pag. 179.

the dictates of natural gratitude, and the universal practice of the *polished* people of the world, should not be numbered among the disciples of Epicurus, and be supposed, without any violation of charity, to say in their hearts there is no God.

I could produce a great number of examples from the classics to prove that the dinner was seldom enjoyed without some mode of consecration, even among those heathens to whom we are inclined to consider ourselves as greatly superior. And shall those who call themselves Christians neglect this instance of piety? Especially as Jesus Christ has given many examples of it in the Gospel, and the people to whom it pleased God peculiarly to reveal himself, practised it from the earliest antiquity. I mentioned the practice of the *polite* heathens in the first place, because I imagined this example would have the most weight with those who chiefly value themselves on *politeness*, of which they sometimes consider the neglect of the *graces* at table, as an honourable testimony. But I will now add some examples from the practice of the Jews, which in this particular, have as much *politeness* in them as those of the Greeks and Romans, and ought to have much greater authority in a Christian country.

The master of the family among the Jews, as soon as the guests or the family were seated, premised a general admonition to prayers, and a consecration of the dinner preceded. The whole company then sung a hymn, which is extant in a book, entitled *the Order of the Blessings and Psalms*, and the master then said the following grace: "Blessed be the Lord our God, the King of the universe, who feedeth the world by his goodness, and by his grace and mercy giveth nourishment to all flesh; by whose bounty it cometh to pass that food never yet hath failed, neither will fail his creatures. It is he alone who giveth existence to all things, and preserveth them, and doth good to all, and giveth food to every being that he hath created. Blessed be thou, O Lord, who feedest all things."

He then consecrated the wine and bread in a form similar to the preceding. This longer process was, however, only observed at formal dinners, and on solemn occasions, a shorter being used on common days: and it is recorded that the master of the house said grace before meat, and one of the guests returned thanks. Perhaps it would be too great a refinement to suppose that the business of returning thanks for a dinner supplied at his expence, was declined by the master from

from motives of delicacy. Sometimes, however, the master returned thanks, and the company made a response. The master said, Let us return thanks to God, because we have eaten of the creatures which belonged to him; and the guests responded immediately, Let God be praised, of whose blessings we have eaten, and by whose bounty we live.

The primitive Christians, imitating the example of the Jews, and more particularly of our Saviour, were strict in the performance of those pious duties which consecrated the table, and in returning thanks to God for the daily supply of necessary sustenance. Chrysostom frequently mentions the benediction of the table made use of by the Monks in Ægypt. In the Horologium of the Greek church, the whole form of the benediction is thus described :

Before the dinner is placed upon the table, the hundredth and forty-fifth psalm is read aloud, and it no sooner is served up, than the priest repeats, O Christ, our God, bless our meat and drink; for thou art holy now and for evermore. Amen. And after having tasted it, they all rise up and say, Blessed art thou, O God, who pitiest us and feedest us from our youth; thou who givest food to all flesh, fill our hearts with joy

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and gladness, that, always being satisfied, we may abound in every good work, in Christ Jesus our Lord, with whom, to thee, be glory, honour, power, and worship, together with the Holy Ghost. Amen. After dinner, the following is the form of thanksgiving: Glory to thee thou holy one, Glory to thee, O King; since thou hast given us food to our comfort and joy, fill us also with the Holy Ghost, that we may be found acceptable in thy sight, and not ashamed when thou shalt render to every one according to his works. Then the hundredth and twenty-second psalm is read; after which—As thou wast present in the midst of thy disciples while at supper, O thou Saviour, giving them peace, so come also to us and save us. Then follows a part of the twenty-second psalm, "The poor shall eat and be filled, they shall praise the Lord who seek him," to the end. *Kyrie Eleison*, Lord have mercy upon us. The whole concludes with this little prayer: Blessed be God, who hath pitied and fed us with his rich gifts; may we enjoy his grace and loving kindness now and for evermore. Amen.

I imagine that the whole of this long grace was only used on extraordinary occasions; but there is no doubt but a part of it constituted the daily formulary of consecration and gratitude.

Far

Far be it from me to recommend a prolixity approaching to that of the Greek church, or to that of the college graces, as established by our pious ancestors, who, according to the complaints of the hungry scholars, used to insist on long graces, and at the same time give but short commons. I think long prayers on such occasions particularly unseasonable. But I have produced these examples to shew that the table has been considered by all people, from the earliest ages, as a *sacred thing*, and that they have ever thought it expedient to sanctify a meal by a previous consecration of the food, and a subsequent act of thanksgiving for the refreshment received. I infer, from the antiquity and universality of the practice, its propriety. It could not have been so antient and universal, unless it had been also right and reasonable.

That it is right and reasonable, I believe many of them who neglect it will not seriously deny. But profligate men of fashion have set the example of omission, and they who are determined to follow the fashion in all its follies, think themselves obliged to omit a duty both easy and useful. They ought not to suffer fashion to supersede duty and decency: but they assert, that, such is the power of this arbitrary tyrant, they cannot do what they ought. A bad excuse indeed, and
such

such an one as will scarcely be accepted for an omission injurious to themselves, to their children, their servants, their neighbourhood, and to the cause of religion.

There is indeed something so brutally thoughtless and ungrateful in partaking of plenty and pleasure, in faring sumptuously every day, without feeling or at least expressing gratitude to the giver of all good gifts, that one would wonder how persons pretending to elegance and sentimental refinement, can possibly pardon themselves the impious ingratitude. Indeed, however genteel they may appear, and however elegant their fashionable manners, yet while they sit down daily to their meals, like the brutes that perish, they must be numbered among Horace's *Epicuri de grege porcos*, hogs of Epicurus's sty, and instead of soup in a China terrene, it would be a proper reproof to serve them up offal in a trough.

Your's, &c.

A RATIONAL FORMALIST.

C H A P. XIII.

*On the literary Character of Dr. Goldsmith.**Ingenii largitor venter.*

THE old saying, *vexatio dat intellectum*, I am sorry to observe, seems to have received some confirmation from the instances of many ingenious men, *digni meliore fato*, worthy of a better fate. To the distresses which poets have felt are often attributed the finest of their poems; but, perhaps, it may be justly urged, that their industry, and not their abilities, was encreased or excited by distress. This indeed is partly true, but not entirely. They must have had abilities inherent in them or they could not have been excited, according to that common observation, that it is impossible to get blood out of a stone; but, at the same time, there is every reason to believe that their abilities were actually improved by that thoughtfulness and attention which distress has a tendency to produce.

And yet, with respect to poetry, a diversity of opinions prevail on the effects of distress; for while the author in my motto says, that hunger gives ingenuity, another informs us, that

Anxietate

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Anxietate carens animus versus facit, omnis acerbi
Impatiens, nec de lodoïce parandâ
Sollicitus ; fatur est cum dicit Horatius, Euce.

That the mind must be free from anxiety in order to make good verses, nor be troubled with the care of procuring a rug. Horace has his belly full when he calls on the name of Bacchus with all the frantic enthusiasm of poetry.

I am afraid Juvenal, who is rather given to declamation, wrote on this subject without a due attention to actual experience : for in his time, as well as ours, poverty seems to have had a favourable influence on poetry. Many instances may be produced of this truth in the annals of modern literati ; and I believe we may add to the number the name of Oliver Goldsmith.

From his want of attention to that economy which dunces often pay, and are very happy in consequence of it, he spent his life in penury. But his mind was rich, and dispensed a portion of its opulence to provide sustenance for its partner. To his distresses the literary world is indebted for a few very fine compositions. In the school of affliction he learned to feel, or at least

to exercise those feelings, which his writings express with so much sensibility. His genius was called forth by want ; and when once he began to feel his strength, he relied on it for support. He who writes for support will often write when necessity urges, rather than when genius impells, and the consequence will be a great inequality.

Goldsmith, though a good writer in prose, appears to me to owe his most solid reputation to his poetry.

Edwin and Angelina is one of the most popular pieces in the language ; perhaps it stands next in the favour of the people to Gray's delightful Elegy. Its general reception proves that its beauties are generally felt, and need not be pointed out by the subtle remarks of critical refinement. The language and sentiments are delicate. The sentiments came from a tender heart, and the language was dictated by a most elegant taste. Who but must lament that he who felt so tenderly, and wrote so sweetly, often wanted a shilling to provide him with his daily bread. But he was compassionate to every child of misfortune, and generous beyond the rules of prudence.

For

For to the houseless child of want
His door was open still,
And, though his portion was but scant,
He gave it with good will.

In the Traveller he adopts a different style of poetry ; but in the strong and nervous language of a Dryden, a Tickell (or of an Addison, in his letter to Lord Hallifax), he exhibits the same fine vein of exquisite sensibility.

The first ten lines constitute a poetical paragraph not often exceeded in magnificence of style and tenderness of affection by any verses in the English language ; and the subsequent passages are seldom inferior in strength, and often exceed it, in imagery. The whole breathes a manly spirit, and a love of human nature, of liberty, and of his country. It is one of those poems which, among the numbers which daily sink in the gulph of oblivion, will glide along the stream of time to late posterity. It is formed to be placed in the rank of classics, because it addresses at once the imagination and the heart. Such feelings are raised by it as must please always and universally ; and this is indeed the effect of all the works which live and flourish in ages distant from their production, when the arts of conciliating favour and exciting attention, and when partiality

partiality and personal interest operate no more.

Next in reputation to the Traveller stands his Deserted Village. The subject did not require so nervous a style as the Traveller; but it required sweetness, tenderness, simplicity, and in these most delightful graces it richly abounds. The poet every where displays a zeal for the happiness of mankind in the lower ranks of society, and a detestation of that pride, vice, and luxury, and of those deviations from nature and primitive simplicity, which enormous opulence contributes to introduce.

The versification has in it something original. It is excellently adapted to the subject, though it is unlike that of Pope, Dryden, or any predecessor. There is something in its flow remarkably pathetic. It came from the heart; and the imagination only added the beautiful tinges of a poetical colouring.

The public who, in a length of time, are always found to decide with solidity of judgment, though often too hasty in their first applause, have selected all the more striking passages of the poem, and almost committed them to memory. The village preacher, the village schoolmaster,
and

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and the village alehouse, are drawn with affection, and have recommended themselves to the attention of every sympathizing reader.

I have known fastidious critics of reputed learning, who pretended that they could see no superior excellence in these poems, and suggested that the popularity of a poem was in their minds a suspicious circumstance, and led them to conclude, *primâ facie*, that it was of little intrinsic value. But it may be fairly concluded that such persons, actuated by envy, undervalue what they have been unable to obtain; and, like the fox in the fable, stigmatize, as unworthy their endeavour, the grapes which they cannot reach.

Men of logical and mathematical heads are apt to view a poem principally with an eye to its plan, and to the mechanical circumstances of method, and the regular disposition of the component parts; but such persons have indeed no juster idea of real beauty, than a common stonemason or bricklayer, who works by rule and line, of the magnificence of a fine piece of architecture.

A poem is indeed the more perfect the more regular its plan; but there are graces beyond the reach

reach of art, and these will fully compensate, when they abound, for the want of mechanical regularity.

Dulcia sunt.

Let poems give pleasure and they will be read, while critics rail unheard and unregarded.

Goldsmith is buried in Poets-Corner, and he is chiefly to be considered as a poet; for though his prose is animated, and contains many fine images expressed in vivid language, yet it is incorrect and unequal, the hasty production of necessity working against inclination.

His *Citizen of the World* has, with many good papers many absurd ones, and many written in a careless manner. It will never hold a distinguished place in a select library.

Some of his *Essays* are beautiful. There is a delicacy of phrase, and a tenderness of affection in many of them, and the author has attempted humour on several subjects with success; but here also is something of inequality, incorrectness, and absurdity.

His

His Vicar of Wakefield I think the best of his prosaic writings. It speaks to the heart, and causes such an interest, as leads the understanding to connive at some degree of improbability.

The Histories of Greece, Rome, and England, are merely compilations, hastily finished for the temporary supply of money; and though they are not without animated passages, cannot be raised higher in the scale of literature than the rank of school-books.

Goldsmith had a great taste for natural history, and wished to write something in the manner of the elder Pliny. But he had not a sufficient share of science to qualify him for the performance. In his *Animated Nature* he therefore had recourse to compiling, and, I believe, descended to mere translation. What he wrote himself displays his genius to advantage, but not his accuracy; and, upon the whole, he appears to have been more solicitous to write an entertaining than a solid book. It may please and improve school-boys and superficial readers, but scholars and philosophers will rather chuse to draw from the fountains which supplied his stream, and which,

it

it must be confessed, in the present case, often runs in a shallow current.

Want made him write much, and rather on subjects suggested by his paymasters than by the unbiassed feelings of his own genius. The lumber of the compilations will sink in the gulph of oblivion; but the poems will glide on to posterity. Their style and pathos have been well imitated by Mr. Crabbe in his Village; nor is the loss of a Goldsmith unsupplied by a Cowper.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

